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Transforming Professional Development for Today's Educational Environment

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Transforming Professional Development for Today's Educational Environment

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Abstract

Professional development is vital to education. It provides an opportunity for continued growth and learning for educators throughout their career. While teachers earn credentials and certification through a university, professional development is intended to hone skills and help teachers evolve in an ever-changing landscape. The changing landscape may involve technology, generational needs, or broader societal interests. This research is an analysis of the implementation of transformational professional development in one large suburban Midwestern school district and one large Midwestern high school in another district. It analyzes data regarding professional development and examines literature that studies teacher participation, attitudes, and transfer of professional development. The research concluded that when teachers are choosing professional development, they are looking for something specific and targeted, and they likely need an incentive to try something different. The research presents the results of data collected during and after the creating and development of professional development plan and attempts to answer the following questions:

How can professional learning be designed to meet the varied needs of all educators and ensure the application of learning to the classroom?

How can social-emotional support for teachers become part of the school culture? Through the data collected, the research found that an adjustment to the content and delivery of professional development could increase the efficiency and transfer of professional development while simultaneously creating a positive school climate and culture.

Acknowledgments

Amy Geurkink-Coats would like to express her deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Phyllis Balcerzak who is truly a student of her craft and has forgotten more than most educators will ever know. I am lucky to call you a friend and mentor.

This dissertation is dedicated to my best friend and favorite teacher, Billy Coats for his patience and gentle soul and to our children, Audrey and Liam, who teach me something new each day.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my supportive wife, Mandy Regina, for her constant encouragement in this process, our children Gianna, Glenn, and Gemma, for reminding me to stop and smile, and my mother, Debra Petty, for instilling work ethic at a young age.

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Joint Introduction

The wheels of bureaucracy grind slowly, but in education, we may have flat tires. Without significant changes to the delivery models, and personalization of content offered in K-12 public educator development, we may continue to see the disconnect between the amount of time and money spent on professional development and the impact it has on practices in the classroom.

According to Passy (2018), education is an increasingly less desirable major (para 2). Be it the public attack on teachers, standardized measures of student achievement, mandated curriculum from the state that can be more politically motivated than student-centered, or the inflexibility of a day dictated by bells, fewer and fewer college students are selecting Education as their major (Passy, 2018). In the mid-seventies, “more than one-fifth (22 percent) of college students majored in education — a higher share than any other major. By 2015 though, fewer than one in 10 Americans pursuing higher education devoted their studies to education.” (Passy, 2018, para. 2)

In our experiences as administrators, with a combination of over forty years in education, there is a common complaint from educators that development topics do not meet their immediate needs, learning cannot be applied at the time of development, or educators feel too overwhelmed and emotionally drained to incorporate new learning.

Contributions of Authors

As a team of educators tasked with planning and delivering professional development for classroom teachers in various roles, our group was committed to finding the most effective ways to deliver professional development for maximum impact on educator well-being and classroom practices.

As researcher, Amy Geurkink-Coats aimed to determine which processes and motivators support the transfer of professional learning into classroom practice. In an increasingly self-selected world educators are (correctly) expected to differentiate instruction to meet needs of each student. According to the Bloomboard and Getting Smart guide, *Moving PD from Seat-Time to Demonstrated Competency Using Micro-Credentials*, “despite new data supporting the need for more job-embedded, modular and personalized approaches to educator development, most professional development is delivered primarily via one-size-fits-all workshops or conference presentations” (“Moving PD”, 2016, p. 3). Within these constraints, educators are expected to customize learning for various students ensuring critical thinking, cooperative learning, and problem-solving skills for all. We live in the Information and Innovation Age, but we are developing educators using Industrial Age strategies and expecting them to innovate for their students. By developing a professional development model that moves away from developing educators en masse, leaving the application of new learning as an afterthought, to a model that encourages applicability and incentivizes the transfer of new learning from the start, we may truly bring educator development into the 21st Century.

As researcher, Richard Regina aimed to determine: what social-emotional supports benefit adult learners and reduce stress? By researching various forms of social-emotional support offered to educators and examining the impact social-emotional support has on teacher attendance, school climate, and other indicators, we believe we will have a positive impact on students as well as employees. This emotional support may reduce the stress educators feel allowing them to have the mental capacity to learn and implement cutting edge, research-based proven methods of best practice.

Planners of professional development are at a place in the education pendulum to be transformational through the implementation of structured social-emotional support for teachers through professional development. Just as classroom management, assessment, and student social-emotional support can be vital parts of professional development that increase student achievement (Payton et al., 2008, p. 7), so too could social-emotional support for teachers. By offering social-emotional support to teachers, administrators are being proactive when working with and through teacher stress. While social-emotional support has had proven benefits for students, giving teachers the tools to manage stress, learn self-care techniques, and build relationships may benefit both teachers and students alike.

This research reflects our commitment to educator learning and well-being as leaders in various capacities in education. We believe when our educators are learning so are our students and through this research, we collectively improved learning opportunities for all educators.

Impact of *Choice in Topic of Professional Learning* and *Method of Compensation* in
Transferring Professional Learning to an Educator's Setting

Amy L Geurkink-Coats

Chapter 1: Background and Rationale

With the implementation in 2001 of high stakes testing required under the No Child Left Behind Act, schools began “making significantly enhanced demands on teachers for increasing knowledge, skills, performance, commitment, and results” (Odden, 2002, p. 67). Eighteen years later, the march toward accountability, Common Core State Standards, the growing intensity of social-emotional needs of students, and the quickening pace technology evolves continue to push on those *skills, performance, commitment, and results* (Odden, 2002, p. 67). According to ABC news, “the pay isn’t much compared to professions with similar educational requirements, and teachers are under constant scrutiny to improve test scores year after year” (Top 10 Most Stressful Jobs, n.d., para. 8).

Despite these increases in pressure, changes to compensation remain one of the most debated topics in public education (Springer, 2009, pg 1). Many movements have tried, and failed, to move away from the long-standing single salary schedule that honors experience and degrees known as a traditional salary scale (Springer, 2009). According to the National Center for Education Statistics Schools and Staffing Survey 2013 report, the most recent year the survey was published, “89.2 percent of public schools” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) remain on a traditional salary scale in the United States. Because of the increasing skills and dispositions with which educators are expected to arm students to be college and career ready, the shrinking size of college students entering the educator development pipeline, and low comparative pay to other professionals, changes to educator pay structures seem inevitable, but in the researcher’s experience, the path forward is unclear and riddled with potholes.

A 2015 global study referenced in Time magazine, found the following:

Elementary and pre-school teachers across 34 developed countries make about 22 percent less, on average, than their full-time counterparts with similar education levels who have chosen to do pretty much anything else with their lives. The numbers are similarly dismal for middle and high school teachers, whose salaries have largely stagnated since the 2008 financial crisis (Sweetland-Edwards, 2015, para. 2).

With more responsibility, higher expectations, and little increase in pay, the incentive for classroom educators to implement new practices is met often with weariness, if not outright resistance (Terhart, 2013). Many educators weigh the options of continuing to use a known, comfortable practice, with the time and energy it would take to research and implement a new practice wonder “how they will personally benefit...[asking themselves] do I have to learn new things, work differently and probably even more, without any direct or symbolic gratification?” (Terhart, 2013, p. 488) There are a limited number of hours in the day and “the internal economy of work (be it simple and boring, or complex and demanding) is always based on the relationship between effort and results and is challenged by change processes” (Terhart, 2013 p. 488).

In the private sector, “loving one's work and making money at it are not mutually exclusive. Many people thoroughly enjoy being lawyers, business people, or webmasters, yet still make large salaries” (Solmon, 2000, p. 21). In education, there is often criticism of educators who ask for compensation for new learning and implementation but “many physicians do great work in preventing and curing illnesses, but still earn handsome salaries” (Solmon, 2000, p. 21).

Extra pay, or extrinsic rewards, has been criticized by Alfie Kohn for decades and his research is often cited as to why incentive programs will not work in education. Kohn argues that “incentive pay, an extrinsic factor, manipulates employee behavior so that people lose intrinsic interest in their work” (Kohn, as cited in Odden, 2002). Interestingly, the “studies on motivation that Kohn cites are laboratory experiments, sometimes with children, rather than studies of the behavioral responses of adults in real work settings with actual incentive plans” (Kohn, as cited in Odden, 2002). More recently, data found in pay-for-performance studies identify that “financial incentives can contribute to positive changes in teaching practices and student outcomes, particularly when coupled with professional development and a supportive organizational structure” (Coggshall, as cited in Jensen, 2010).

In the United States, over \$18 billion is spent annually on teacher professional development (Horn, 2018). As McDonald states, on average, 40 percent of educators do not transfer new knowledge learned in professional development sessions into their classrooms. After one year, less than 34 percent of educators are using *any* new ideas learned at professional learning sessions in their setting (2014, p. 1573). If a high-school of one hundred teachers had a budget of \$100 per teacher to spend on professional development annually, and the research shows we are spending much more (Horn, 2018), this is the equivalent of throwing away \$66,000 per year. If new learning and practices are only incorporated into an educator's pedagogy a third of the time, our students are not benefiting from two-thirds of the learning in which educators participate. There are a variety of reasons that new knowledge is not transferred to classrooms: educators are overworked, underpaid, and often feel too stressed to change practice (Top 10 Most

Stressful Jobs, n.d.). Current professional learning models rarely require (or even request) transfer of learning into practice (Appova, 2017), and 50 percent of professional learning in which educators participate does not apply to the students or subjects they teach (TNTP, 2015). This study utilized action research methodology to combat this trend of minimum transfer and determine how to change the trajectory of implementation of professional development to the classroom.

Problem Statement

Most professionals are expected, “and many states require, attorneys, doctors, dentists, and other professionals to attend recognized educational events to retain licensure to practice where they reside” (Wang, 2018, p. 185). Most states have similar mandates for educators, “however, standards are broad, they often change, money is tight, and development efforts are far less organized than those mentioned above, rendering teachers’ professional development far more challenging and significantly more complex” (Wang, 2018). Acknowledging the combination of limited funds with less organized mandates, it is easy to understand why “only about 40 percent reported that most of their professional development activities were a good use of their time” (Wang, 2018).

Odden found, the challenge for school districts is to continue to honor the intrinsic variables that motivate educators, including:

ample opportunities to create a sense of professional efficacy through goal setting, professional development, job enlargement, job involvement, and goal attainment” while implementing extrinsic variables that reinforce the development of expertise, which is crucial in order for goal-setting and participation theory to

work but do not cause educators to lose intrinsic interest in their work and stop cooperating or collaborating with coworkers (2002, p. 77).

In the researcher's experience, school districts are prioritizing how to effectively and efficiently use every dollar. Professional development is often selected as an area for cuts because it can be challenging to correlate direct increases in student achievement with professional learning (Lavy, 2007). Data that monitors the transfer of new learning into the educators' setting after the professional learning event occurs have not been systemic (Appova, 2017).

Based on the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate and using the Dissertation in Practice Action Research Format, (CPED, n.d.) the purpose of this research was to focus on the professional learning *processes* and *motivators* that cause educators to transfer professional learning into her/his individual setting then use that information to iterate an instrument that ensures the learning in which educators participate is meaningful *and* transfers to the classroom. A secondary purpose was to measure attitudinal data toward professional learning when financial compensation was linked to evidence of transfer versus seat-time hours. After a thorough review the of the practitioner and professional resources, the possibilities of compensating educators for the demonstration of learning and evaluating the success of professional learning based on the transfer of learning, appears to be a simple, mostly unexplored, model of professional development.

Research Questions

The overarching research question of this study asked: *How can professional learning be designed to meet the varied needs of all educators and ensure the application of learning to the classroom?*

The sub-questions used to enhance the research process included:

- How satisfied are educators with current professional development opportunities?
- How incentivized are educators to participate in professional development when they have choice in topic?
- How incentivized are educators to participate in professional development when they earn financial compensation for evidence of transfer of new learning?

Definition of Terms

The following operational terms were utilized in this study:

Competency-Based Professional Development is a professional development model that “puts emphasis is on application, performance and understanding” of the professional development objectives” (Immel, 2011). Also known as incentive-based, skills-based, knowledge-based, competency-based, or micro-credential professional development.

Compensation is defined as the salary earned by an educator for the work completed in his/her school district job assignment.

Merit Pay systems provide increases in salary, or bonuses, based on one of two measures allocating “a fixed fund of money based on administrators’ judgments of teacher performance during the prior year” (Milanowski, 2002, p. 1) or based on student achievement data.

Micro-Credentials are a type of Competency-Based Professional Development that identifies competency in a specific topic through the completion of curated learning activities, assessments, demonstrations or projects related to the topic.

Performance Evaluation is the “formal process a school uses to review and rate teachers’ performance and effectiveness in the classroom.” Performance evaluations typically “include classroom observations conducted by principals or other school administrators, sometimes with the help of rubrics or checklists” (Sawchuk, 2015, para. 2).

Personalized Learning “refers to a diverse variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies that are intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students” (Great Schools, 2014).

Professional Development (PD)/Professional Learning (PL) “may be used in reference to a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced

professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness” (Great Schools, 2014).

Professional Learning Community is a model describing educators working collaboratively to improve student learning (DuFour, 2004).

Salary Scale is a “salary system (in education) in which employees' base pay increases are determined by educational attainment level and years of service” (Douglas, 2012). This process is also known as a step-and-ladder system.

Student Achievement Data “measures the amount of academic content a student learns in a determined amount of time. Each grade level has learning goals or instructional standards that educators are required to teach” (Carter, n.d.).

Significance of Study

The findings of The New Teacher Project two-year study surveying over 10,000 teachers searching for what works in professional development found that “the evidence base for what actually helps teachers improve is very thin” (TNTP, 2015, p. i). The study used improvements on the administrator completed teacher evaluation as the measure of success of professional development.

In the New Teacher Project study, nearly half of all educators did not find the professional development time usefully spent. This demonstrates the disconnect between

the development offered and the development desired. The authors noted that “less than half of the teachers we surveyed told us they received professional development that was ongoing, tailored to their specific development needs or even targeted to the students or subject they teach” (TNTP, 2015, p. 26). Few master educators would treat all students in exactly the same way. Differentiating lessons based on student background knowledge, missing skills, and interest levels are all a part of the regular planning practices of high-quality teachers. The TNTP authors concluded that:

Perhaps the same principle holds true for teacher improvement, too. It doesn’t matter how many thousands of development activities a district offers if it fails to consistently connect teachers with the activities that are right for them, at the right time. As one teacher explained in a focus group, ‘If our students need choices, we need choices, too. We are differentiating for our kids, but no one is differentiating for me’” (2015, p. 26).

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Educator Compensation

In traditional salary systems, increases in pay for educators are based on the number of years spent in the school or system and the number of post-graduate hours earned at a university. This system “was originally aimed at preventing pay inequity between men and women prevalent until the 1940s” (Firestone, as cited in Jensen, 2010, p. 2). This practice remains in place in most American school districts today. There is research to support “including experience as one of multiple components of teacher compensation. Although teacher experience *is* correlated with student achievement, the greatest effects occur in the first few years of teaching” (Hanover, 2015, p. 3). In the researcher’s observation, when experience becomes the only component determining teacher compensation, there is little incentive for educators to implement new practices later in their career. As reform movements started questioning annual pay increases, incentive-based merit systems gained popularity but had unintended consequences. In a merit pay system, teachers that earn superior evaluations or increase student achievement data earn incentives, typically extra pay either as a bonus or addition to base pay.

The thinking behind using educator evaluation was by rewarding educators for success in the classroom, these educators would be inclined to remain in the classroom, and by not rewarding mediocrity, merit pay would naturally weed out weak educators (Milanowski, 2002). In practice, this system was often found to be “based on administrators’ subjective judgments of teacher performance during the prior year” (Milanowski, 2002, p. 1). More recent iterations of merit pay initiatives have attempted to address the “opaque goals, which make it hard for teachers to understand the program

and undermine their support for it” (Lavy, 2007, p. 94) but a new concern has emerged in the era of Professional Learning Communities. In PLCs, “teachers share their results from assessments with their colleagues, and they quickly learn when a teammate has been particularly effective in teaching a certain skill. Team members consciously look for successful practice and attempt to replicate it in their own practice” (DuFour, 2004, p. 11). If only 10 percent of educators per building are eligible for the additional merit pay bonus, the desire to share high-quality lessons and pedagogy with teammates drops to almost zero and teams see colleagues as competition instead of pooling knowledge and skills together to benefit all students.

The second type of merit pay system ties increases in pay to student achievement data has also had unintended consequences. “Because test scores measure only certain skills, linking compensation to test scores might cause teachers to sacrifice the nurturing of curiosity and creative thinking to teaching the skills tested on standardized exams—a practice known as teaching to the test” (Lavy, 2007, p. 92). In the information age, the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn, or to stay curious and creative, has moved from nice-to-know to essential. By teaching to the test, and leaving out critical skills for success, we are not ensuring students are college and career ready at graduation. Likewise, state tests are not given in every grade, or all subjects, leaving many educators without the opportunity to earn additional pay at all.

In 2004, Denver Public Schools passed a tax hike to underwrite incentive-based teacher pay (Keller, 2005). This tax funded a wide-reaching compensation program for educators creating opportunities for “salary increases or bonuses for completing degrees, undertaking professional-development projects, raising scores on state tests, or teaching

in high-poverty schools or in academic areas such as English as a second language where there are shortages of qualified teachers” (Keller, 2005, para. 11). Fourteen years into the program, the multiple compensation packages have proven to be confusing and frustrating (Asmar, 2016). When analyzing the professional-development projects that can be used by educators to earn incentive compensation, most remain directly linked to student test scores and performance evaluations. These are the same subjective and difficult to correlate measures that have proven problematic in the past.

If merit pay systems have been found to be ineffective, and extrinsic variables can motivate high work performance (Odden, 2002), what options are available for schools to implement to increase motivation to change practice? The issue does not seem to be that additional pay is inherently untenable in public education, but that the types of systems we have tried have been problematic.

Demonstration of Learning

A key missing component in the Denver, and most, professional development systems is that they do “not appear to require teachers to demonstrate they obtained knowledge and skills” (Kimball, 2016, p. 15) yet tie increases in pay to outside or arbitrary measures. When educators in these systems participate in professional learning, they are most often credited for attendance, or seat time, at the event instead of for transfer and application of the learning after the development has occurred. These current practices “place too much focus on quantity rather than quality of teachers' learning” (Appova, 2017, p. 5) and repeat the same absence of accountability that leads to little motivation, or incentive, to change practice. Teachers are able to learn new

strategies fairly quickly, but many need support to be able to successfully implement into their classroom (Gulamhussein, 2013).

While the purpose of professional development is to “enable educators to develop the knowledge and skills they need to address students' learning challenges” (Mizell, 2010, p. 10) “showing that professional development translates into gains in student achievement poses tremendous challenges, despite an intuitive and logical connection” (Borko, as cited in Yoon, 2007, p. 3). The Regional Educational Laboratory at Edvance Research explains it this way:

Professional development affects student achievement through three steps. First, professional development enhances teacher knowledge and skills. Second, better knowledge and skills improve classroom teaching. Third, improved teaching raises student achievement. If one link is weak or missing, better student learning cannot be expected. If a teacher fails to apply new ideas from professional development to classroom instruction, for example, students will not benefit from the teacher's professional development (2007, p. 4).

By structuring professional learning systems for *transfer*, “we have the opportunity to actually see how teachers change their practice with students” (Wolf, 2016, para. 6). Traditional professional development systems have mis-measured effectiveness. Requiring educators to develop “artifacts to submit may encourage, or nudge, teachers to go the extra step and try what they are learning with students” (Wolf, 2016, para. 6). This simple adjustment strengthens the steps outlined above and moves much closer to linking student learning to new ideas from professional development.

Design of Professional Learning

In 2014, the Boston Consulting Group engaged a research study to identify the needs and opportunities for professional development (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2014, p. 2). funded by the Gates Foundation. Analyzing interview and survey data from over three thousand educators, only “29 percent of teachers are highly satisfied with current professional development offerings” (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2014, p. 3). Despite new data supporting, “the need for more job-embedded, modular and personalized approaches to educator development, most professional development is delivered and managed -- primarily via one-size-fits-all workshops or conference presentations” (“Moving PD”, 2016, p. 3). We are still delivering professional learning in the same, failed modes of the past. As Yoon described, the workshop model has little evidence of impacting practice and short, one-shot workshops often don’t change teacher practice and have little effect on student achievement (Yoon, 2007). Workshops may catch the brunt of failed professional learning models, but they are not the only issue.

Other well-documented problems related to traditional professional development include:

- lack of collaboration.
- lack of personalization (often disconnected from practice).
- little opportunity to demonstrate new knowledge or skills (rarely including timely topics and relevant practices that evolve over time).
- lack of leadership opportunities.
- input-driven versus outcome-driven measures (professional development credit hours versus demonstrations of mastery).

- and high teacher attrition rates (“Moving PD”, 2016)

While many factors have been identified as the cause of failure in professional learning, Guskey “situates the problem of teachers’ dissatisfaction squarely in the *design* of PD offerings” (Appova, 2017, p. 6). If we acknowledge that it is rare that all students in one classroom would benefit equally from a single lecture, why do we cling to the idea that all educators would benefit from the same professional development sessions? Like students, teachers demonstrate a variety of emotional, intellectual, social, and professional characteristics (Korthagen, 2017).

When educators *are* asked about the best practices in professional learning, “they suggest that the ideal professional learning experience should focus less on presentations and lectures and more on opportunities to apply learning through demonstrations or modeling and practice” (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2014, p. 4). Much like the students they teach, adults learn better by doing. Appova and Arbaugh found that “meaning and relevance of the new knowledge together with teachers’ ability to transfer and apply new knowledge immediately to their classrooms is critical to the enterprise of teacher learning” (2017, p. 18). Without direct application to the classroom, why would we expect a change in practice?

Beyond Merit Pay Systems: Competency-Based Professional Development.

There are emerging professional learning systems moving away from the merit-pay model of tying additional education compensation to student achievement and performance-based evaluations. “In contrast to merit pay systems, which evaluate teachers against each other, skill-based pay systems allow all teachers the opportunity to develop skills that may increase their compensation” (Hanover, 2015, p. 5). While the

common language has not settled on a single term, this “design enhances a deeper understanding and more successful implementation of teaching strategies that result in stronger student learning” but the focus stays on objectively compensating educators “when they put new skills into practice” (Loveland, 2017, para. 21). Several states are experimenting with this type of professional learning sometimes referred to as incentive-based, skills-based, knowledge-based, competency-based, or micro-credential professional learning.

In a competency-based compensation system, “what is important is not how much time teachers spend in university classrooms, but that they have developed and demonstrated specific teaching skills” to their setting (Atchison, 2010, para. 5). No matter the name, this professional learning “provides stronger evidence of teacher growth” (Loveland, 2017, para. 15) than traditional systems that compensate educators for attendance at development sessions but do not incentivize, or measure for, transfer of learning into the educators’ practice. A skills-based compensation system “encourages teachers to develop skills known to be associated with student achievement and avoids penalizing skilled teachers whose students fail to progress despite high-quality teaching” (Hanover, 2015, p. 5).

Micro-Credentials: Curated Professional Learning Choices. Micro-credentials, one form of competency-based professional learning, is quickly gaining popularity and has been adopted in several districts and states as demonstration of learning for recertification. These states include Arkansas, Delaware, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin (DeMonte, 2017).

The structure of micro-credentials is appealing to many states, districts, and individual educators because, historically, educators have had little say in what professional development they participated. While educators constantly ask to participate in professional development opportunities that are related to the work they do in their own classrooms districts have limited professional development funds and, depending on the district's location, limited access to professional development events (DeMonte, 2013). The ability to individualize professional learning seems out of reach to most districts and for many content-specific educators until the concept of micro-credentials was introduced. Micro-credentials are “often delivered online, meaning it can be more accessible to rural educators and those who need to engage in professional learning in the evening, on weekends, or during school breaks” and “allow teachers to personalize their professional learning” (DeMonte, 2017, p. 8).

The process of micro-credentialing is defined by Digital Promise in the following steps:

1. A district will develop, or partner with a provider to develop, a series of approved micro-credential modules.
2. Educators login and select the micro-credential module(s) they wish to complete.
3. The modules typically include resources (articles or videos) on the topic to drive the learning for the educator and a rubric defining the evidence required to earn the micro-credential.
4. The educator creates required evidence and submits to the scorer.

5. The scorer awards micro-credential or provides feedback as to what improvements/changes are needed to earn micro-credential (“Educator Micro-Credentials”, n.d.,)

The online flexibility combined with “giving teachers control of their own professional learning” (DeMonte, 2017, p. 10) may be why “97 percent of respondents wanted to pursue another micro-credential” according to survey results from North Carolina State University College of Education Friday Institute (Acree, 2016, p. 2), numbers hard to replicate with almost any other type of professional learning.

Personalized Professional Development: Educator Designed Professional Learning. In the micro-credential iteration of professional development, teacher voice and choice are increased but true personalizing moves beyond adding choice. “Personalized learning involves the student in the creation of learning activities” (Basye, 2018, para. 13). While this concept pushes on traditional instructional practices, many schools are also coming to the “understanding that teachers had never experienced it [personalized learning] themselves and are struggling with how to do it in the classroom” (Sawchuk, 2016, para. 16). We are currently at a crossroads in public education and as Vander states, “if we want more students to experience powerful learning, we need to create development pathways that allow school [teacher] and district leaders to benefit from the same blended, competency-based and deeper learning experiences that they seek to create for students” (2015, para. 2).

This type of professional learning has yet to have a commercial term but will be referenced as Personalized Professional Development in this study. Modeled after the

choice projects gaining popularity with students, “teachers can choose their own professional learning activities, but must submit a request for approval before the district will allow the activity to count” (Kimball, 2016, p. 14). After completing the learning and implementation, educators “submit evidence—such as samples of student work and written reflections—that they’ve brought their new skills to the classroom” (Loveland, 2017, para. 30). This built-in reflective step allows educators to “assess how their new skills have improved instruction and gives them a sense of agency in their own professional goals” (Loveland, 2017, para. 29).

This form of professional development would be a radical departure from current practice. “Fewer than one in three teachers (30 percent) choose most or all of their professional learning opportunities. Nearly one in five (18 percent) never have a say in their professional development” (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2014, p. 10). Yet educators that are can choose their “professional learning opportunities are more than twice as satisfied with professional development as those that have no say” (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2014, p. 10). In the researcher’s experience, districts resisting choice in professional learning often do so because of lack of manpower and management. Questions of who will manage the requests submitted by educators and approve the submissions must be addressed ahead of implementation, or the process will be sure to fail are often observed by the researcher. The seemingly large task of managing multiple pathways of professional learning may help explain why many are looking to pre-curated, third-party micro-credentials that offer some choice because the management can be outsourced despite the additional cost incurred to the district.

One workaround to the managing of Personalized Professional Development may be in a redefinition of professional development activities for “much of what systems consider professional development, teachers perceive as wasted time” (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2014, p. 11).

By leveraging the self-reflection component of Personalized Professional Development, districts may find this type of learning manageable. The money saved by keeping the process in-district could be reallocated as stipends directly to the educators and solve the issue of “lack of stipends/resources, not generally available to teachers to pursue professional development outside their contract hours, demotivated teachers’ learning and leaving them feeling skeptical about their district’s genuine investment in/appreciation of teachers’ learning” (Appova, 2017, p. 5).

Cohorts as Professional Learning. One time, drive-by professional development does not sustain change in practice (Appova, 2017). Unfortunately, best practices are sometimes set aside to report a on a district initiative to school boards or the parent community. For example, communicating that 90 percent of educators are certified in ____ technique is more straightforward than explaining the need for release time for teachers to sit together in a room. Yet, this is precisely what teachers repeatedly request: time to work together “via small, content-specific and needs-based teacher collaborations” (Appova, 2017, p. 11). This time is “highly desirable and motivating, and that teachers’ input and the district’s trust in teachers’ abilities to learn collectively are crucial for achieving effective and collaborative teacher-learning” (Appova, 2017, p. 11). It can be a tough sell to school boards as time away from students always has a cost-benefit. While an expensive expert may be brought in to lead development for one or

two days, teachers find that their ability to sustain changes wain. In an interview with Appova one teacher explained:

I'm pretty good for a month or two and then I get lazy. I think if I had some sort of accountability that was really pressing me to continue to think about it, and talk about it, and read about it – I would be apt to stick with it. Because I do think it's important, and I know it's important – but for some reason it fades away.

-Olivia, mid-career, junior high (2017, p. 12).

Cohort learning groups provide this accountability and increase teacher motivation. “Engaging in small content-specific collaborative learning groups situated around common concerns and needs” (Appova, 2017, p. 11) may not have the star power of a national expert, but they do have the long-term impact that we so crave in professional development models.

Motivation to Change Practice. A meta-analysis funded through the National Science Foundation analyzing “teacher motivation for those planning, conducting, and evaluating PD” (Schieb, 2011, p. 6) found there has been “no systematic focus” on the “degree to which teachers’ motivation and engagement in PD influences their classroom instruction” (Schieb, 2011, p. 7). School districts spend billions on teacher development each year (Horn, 2018) but there is little data collected around the influence professional development has on changing classroom practice. While many studies have evaluated and assessed professional learning, there are few that measure “teachers’ own mastery or performance achievement goals” (Schieb, 2011, p. 8). Dan Weisberg, TNTP’s chief executive states:

We are bombarding teachers with a lot of help, but the truth is, it's not helping all that much. We are not approaching this in a very smart way. We're basically throwing a lot of things against the wall and not even looking to see whether it works (Layton, 2015, para. 2).

In an era of accountability, “the current system tracks and measures professional development efficacy via the inputs (money spent, workshops attended, consultants hired) rather than the outputs (improved practice)” (“Moving PD, 2016, p. 4). There seems to be much room for improvement in how we develop professional learning, impact teacher practice and spend these dollars.

Chapter 3: Actions and Methods

This chapter will review/state the methodology used in the study as related to addressing the research questions. The overarching research question of this study asked: *How can professional learning be designed to meet the varied needs of all educators and ensure the application of learning to the classroom?*

The sub-questions used to enhance the research process included:

- How satisfied are educators with current professional development opportunities?
- How incentivized are educators to participate in professional development when they have choice in topic?
- How incentivized are educators to participate in professional development when they earn financial compensation for evidence of transfer of new learning?

Context and Characterization of Participants

The research took place in a well-resourced, Midwestern school district. The district serves suburban, middle and upper-middle-class community west of the city with approximately 17,000 students. The district is made up of nineteen elementary schools (grades K-5), five middle schools (grades 6-8), four traditional high schools (grades 9-12), one alternative high school (grades 9-12), one alternative discipline center for long term suspensions, and seven preschool locations (ages 2-5). One hundred percent of educators in the district hold regular certificates with an average of 14 years of experience. Eighty percent of teachers have been awarded advanced degrees. The initial

sample size included approximately 1,500 certified educators and special educators working in the district.

The request for participation was distributed through a direct digital mailing of the researcher created survey. A total of 479 educators participated in the survey out of approximately 1,500 certified staff members. Of the 479 respondents, 0.42% (n=2) were early childhood educators, 41.9% (n=201) were elementary educators, 22.3% (n= 107) were middle school educators, 31.9% (n=153) were high school educators, 0.42% (n=2) were Special School District educators, separately hired educators that operate in a district within district model, and 2.7% (n=13) were administrators. One respondent did not select level (see Table 1 for Initial Survey Respondents by Level). Unless otherwise noted, the lower Likert-type scores of one and two were combined, and the higher scores of three and four were combined in the analyses of data to better see differences in responses. A limitation to note is that early childhood, administrators and Special School District educators were underrepresented in the initial survey results and were removed from analysis for the rest of the study.

Table 1

Initial Survey Respondents by Level

At what level are you primarily located?	COUNT	%
Unknown	1	0.21%
District	3	2.71%
Early Childhood	2	0.42%
Elementary School	201	41.96%
High School	153	31.94%
Middle School	107	22.34%
Special Educator	2	0.42%
Grand Total	479	100%

When analyzed for years in education, educators with 1-3 years counted for 8.78% (n=42) of respondents, 33.27% (n=159) had 4-11 years in education while 12-20 years counted for 35.77% (n=171) of respondents, and 21.95% (n=105) of respondents had taught for 21 or more years in education. The participation group was a broad cross-section that mirrored the demographics of the district's certified educators (see Table 2 Initial Survey Respondent by Years in Education).

Table 2

Initial Survey Respondents by Years in Education

What year are you currently serving in education (combined in and out of this district)?	COUNT	%
1-3 year	42	8.79%
4-11 years	159	33.26%
12-20 years	171	35.77%
21 years or more	105	21.97%
Unknown	2	0.42%
Grand Total	498	100.00%

Follow-up survey subjects were recruited voluntarily from the 185 educators that initiated a Personalized Professional Development Experience (the intervention instrument) through a direct electronic request. A consent form noting standard of care was included in the follow-up survey (see [Appendix A](#) for Informed Consent Form). Confidentiality was maintained by limiting access to identifiable information (only primary investigator had access) and securely storing data documents within locked or electronic password protected locations. Identifiers will be removed and destroyed within five years of the conclusion of the research.

The Role of Subjects

Subjects completed researcher-developed surveys to gather data reflecting on the process and impact of the Personalized Professional Learning Experience (intervention instrument) to their instructional setting. The data from subjects were used to gain insight on the processes of professional development that led to the most transfer, iterate the intervention instrument for ease of use, and to analyze the impact of choice in professional learning to inform future district policy for educators.

Research Design

This study was designed to be an action research investigation also known as a Problem-Based Thesis (PBT). “In doing a PBT, the doctoral candidate identifies and defines a significant problem within his or her organization, collects decision-oriented information, analyzes the problem thoroughly, and develops a feasible plan to solve the problem. The PBT tries to persuade organizational decision makers to act on a problem in specified ways (a solution) with recommended actions, not conclusions. Whereas the research dissertation’s last chapter offers ‘conclusions,’ the PBT offers ‘recommendations and plans’ (Archbald, 2008).

The study used a Multistage Mixed-Methods Framework. “In a *Multistage Mixed-Methods Framework*, researchers use multiple stages of data collection that may include various combinations of exploratory sequential, explanatory sequential, and convergent approaches. By definition, such investigations will have multiple stages. This type of framework may be used in longitudinal studies focused on evaluating the design, implementation, and assessment of a program or intervention” (Mertens, 2017). To

illustrate the Multistage Mixed-Methods Framework used in this study (see Figure 1 for Framework).

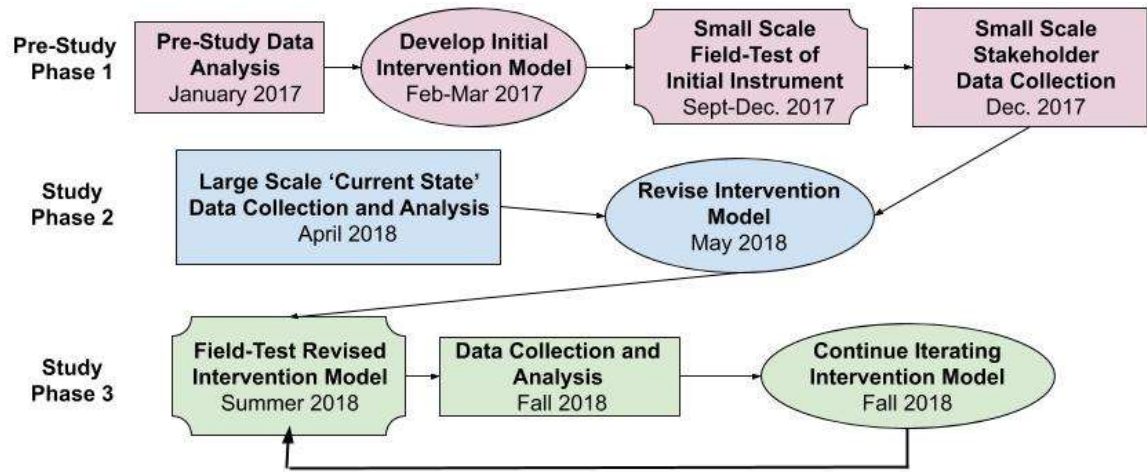


Figure 1. Model for multistage mixed-methods framework for study

Timeline of Phases

The timeline of the three phases of this *Multistage Mixed-Methods* study are illustrated in the table below (see Table 3 for Multistage Mixed-Methods Framework in Action of this Study).

Table 3

Multistage Mixed-Methods Framework in Action of this Study

	Date	Action	Analysis
Phase 1	*January 2017	Pre-study survey administered: Professional Development Evaluation Educator Survey 2017	Survey results analyzed for effectiveness, opportunity and time needed.
	*February- May 2017	Development of initial intervention instrument: (Iteration I) From Inputs to Outputs	
	*September- December 2017	Small scale field test of initial intervention instrument: From Inputs to Outputs	Stakeholder feedback collected and analyzed from Professional Development Action Team and Personalized PD Experiences Feedback
March 2018 Dissertation in Practice study approved			
Phase 2	April 2018	Districtwide Personalized Learning Survey administered	Results analyzed and Key Components identified for future iterations of intervention instrument
	May 2018	Revision of intervention instrument using Key Components: (Iteration II) Personalized PD: You Decide the Learning	
Phase 3	Summer 2018	Field-Test of revised intervention instrument: (Iteration II) Personalized PD: You Decide the Learning	
	September 2018	Revision of intervention instrument using tiers: (Iteration III) Tiered Personalized PD	Participant feedback collected and analyzed to inform future iterations
		Personalized Professional Development Handbook Developed and implemented	
	November 2018	Revision of intervention instrument to include Response Template (Iteration IV)	

*pilot data

Procedure

Pre-Study Phase One. As shown in Figure 1, the study was administered in three phases. The first involved the analysis of a previous electronic survey, the *Professional Development Evaluation Educator Survey 2017*, conducted by the researcher in January of 2017, who functions in the role of Talent Development Coordinator for a large, well-resourced, suburban Midwest school district (see [Appendix B](#) for survey). This survey attempted to gain insight on the problem, found in both the literature and in practice, of professional development not transferring at high levels to educator's classrooms.

The researcher asked both open and closed questions to gather information about:

- Opportunities for educators at all levels and content areas to participate in meaningful professional development.
- The perceived effectiveness of district offered professional learning.
- The time desired by teachers for professional learning.

As the quantitative data were analyzed, the qualitative data were used to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a deeper understanding and context of the participants.

Research Design Process. The following comments are representative of the qualitative answers from the pre-study data collected on the *Professional Development Evaluation Educator Survey 2017*. In response to the open-ended question that followed, “*There are enough professional learning opportunities offered in district to help me reach my individual learning goals,*” the educators that were NOT satisfied (indicated by

marking a 1 or 2 on the four-point Likert-type scale) were found to respond typically in one of three ways. They were not satisfied with:

1. *not being paid for participating in or the cost to participate in* professional development.
2. the lack of professional development relevant to their content.
3. the fixed times professional development was available.

Responses to concerns about the pay/cost of professional development included, “They are mainly unpaid, which I cannot afford to attend” (Teacher 1, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017), and “I would appreciate being compensated for my time” (Teacher 2, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017). Other educators identified the cost of childcare as a challenge, “Part of my reason for disagreeing is because I am a new mom, and the PD offered requires me to pay for childcare. So, if I don't think it will help me improve my teaching, I am not going to pay \$100+ to attend” (Teacher 3, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017), and “I really enjoy the summer model for ELA professional development. However, much of it is unpaid. With children, it is not reasonable to pay for a sitter and spend 2-4 days on development without a stipend” (Teacher 4, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017).

A second group identified the topics of the professional development offered did not apply to educator's content or interests. Comments like, “Again, there is little offered for my discipline or for my classroom structure (Teacher 5, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017) and “I want to pursue something of my own interest, I should be given more flexibility” (Teacher 6, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017) or “If teachers are expected to differentiate teaching, shouldn't professional development be

differentiated to meet what the TEACHER needs to impact their students?” (Teacher 7, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017). The following comment summed up how many seemed to feel, “The best PD opportunities are the days where there are a variety of options and we can choose the ones which we find most interesting or beneficial to our students” (Teacher 8, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017).

Finally, a number of educators identified the times professional development was available, typically before or after school, a challenge. Many referenced their family including, “We have lots of ways to learn... however they don't always meet at convenient times” (Teacher 9, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017), and “I prefer courses which I can do at my own pace without leaving my kids (Teacher 10, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017). One respondent explained, “Being a late start/late release [building], I feel like a lot of the development opportunities have already started by the time we get out. Or if they haven't started, they start before we have the opportunity to get there,” (Teacher 11, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017), and another stated, “I really like the new online options” (Teacher 12, Professional Learning Survey, Winter 2017).

Taking the above themes into consideration, an initial, somewhat more personalized, professional development model (the intervention instrument) was created.

Iteration I (intervention instrument). The initial instrument, *From Inputs to Outputs: Personalized Micro-Learning Opportunities*, was a three-step process based on teachers completing a micro-credential through a third-party vendor (or similar product) and submitting a reflection to the Talent Development Office for approval (see [Appendix](#)

[C](#) for initial instrument). Next, a small scale field-test was initiated using the initial instrument. Participants self-selecting to participate in the initial field test were sent a direct electronic invitation to complete a follow-up survey to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the experience (see [Appendix D](#) for Personalized Professional Development Experiences Feedback Survey). Questions focused on ease of process, financial compensation as motivator, and transfer of learning to the classroom using a four-point Likert-type scale. Open-ended questions were asked to allow participants to explain thinking behind each closed question. At the same time as the field-test, key stakeholders on the Professional Learning Action Team, an elected representative body of K-12 educators and administrators tasked with reviewing professional learning in the district, were surveyed to collect qualitative information on the perceived effectiveness of the *Personalized Micro-Learning Opportunities* instrument. The data collected included: challenges for implementation, and suggestions for improvement using a researcher-developed survey (see [Appendix F](#) for Feedback Survey on Initial Intervention Instrument)

The *Personalized Micro-Learning Opportunities* instrument attempted to address the three themes that had emerged from the pre-pilot data. First, *Personalized Micro-Learning Opportunities* utilized online micro-credentials, thus increasing ‘flexibility in the times educators could participate in professional development’ since the educator decided when to complete the online work. There was also an increased number of choices in topics available for educators to select addressing the *lack of professional development relevant to their content*. Unfortunately, the list of offerings was not exhaustive, and several educators were interested in learning about topics not

offered. For example, one stakeholder reflected, “Who approves/validates micro-learning topics? I don't see a lot for my area,” (Teacher 13, Personalized PD Instrument-Stakeholder Feedback, Dec. 1, 2017) and “Many courses are not directly related to my content area as an encore [specialist] teacher,” (Teacher 14, Personalized PD Instrument-Stakeholder Feedback, Dec. 1, 2017).

Finally, in the attempt to address the third theme of dissatisfaction with ‘*not being paid for participating in or the cost to participate in* professional development,’ educators that successfully completed a *Personalized Micro-Learning Opportunity* submitted completion certificates and reflections were awarded a \$75 stipend by the Office of Talent Development. This proved to be problematic in practice because the providers of the online micro-credentials were third-party vendors and there was no local say in the requirements to earn the micro-credential. A wide variety of expectations from one micro-credential to another was found resulting in frustration among participants, “Some examples feel like \$75, but some examples look like a lot more work,” (Teacher 15, Personalized PD Instrument-Stakeholder Feedback, Dec. 1, 2017).

Analysis of the feedback from the field test and stakeholder reviews demonstrated that the initial intervention instrument, *Personalized Micro-Learning Opportunities*, did not result in a satisfactory model of intervention. Input from the Professional Learning Action Team on the first iteration demonstrated there was interest in this type of professional learning but some confusion about the work. Comments like, “If there is not yet a common definition of micro-credentialing, how could we evaluate them?” (Teacher 16, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, September 12, 2017) and “Who is the ‘panel of educators’ that review these?” (Teacher 17, Personalized PD Experiences

Feedback Survey, October 23, 2017) illustrated the need for more defined expectations and local control. Finally, the overall focus of the action research: determining how professional learning could be designed to ensure application to the classroom was not adequately addressed with the *Personalized Micro-Learning Opportunities* instrument.

Study Phase Two. After the field-test and stakeholder input found the initial instrument to be inadequate in solving the research problem, the researcher moved into Phase two, the official data collection phase of this study. Specific information on *processes* and *motivators* that cause educators to transfer professional learning into her/her setting and the impact of choice in topic on participation in professional development were needed before a second iteration of the instrument could be created.

To gather this information, an electronic researcher-developed survey was administered with two types of questions (see [Appendix E](#) for Professional Learning Survey, April 2018). Closed questions were asked, using a four-point Likert-type scale and checkbox grid, to determine attitudes toward professional development currently available, transfer of learning from different modes of professional development to setting, interest in adding educator choice of topic to professional development offerings, and financial compensation as a motivator to transfer professional development into setting. Open questions were offered to collect free responses about types of learning that support the transfer of new knowledge and practices to the classroom and attitudinal data on personalized professional learning experiences. Participants responses were analyzed based on demographic data including the number of years in education, level of assignment (i.e., elementary, middle, high), and primary responsibilities (i.e., core, specialist [also known as encore]). Descriptive analyses were conducted using frequency

tables to summarize participant's responses and to determine if there was a significant difference between the groups of educators with various years of experience in education and job assignments in:

- Satisfaction with current professional development options.
- Frequency of choice in topic of professional development learning.
- Choice in topic as a motivator to pursue professional development.
- Amount of transfer of professional development to setting based on the mode of learning.

It is appropriate to use a qualitative approach to this study because Personalized Professional Development is an emerging field and using only quantitative results would risk missing key concepts that led to the transfer of professional learning to an educator's setting. The results of the survey were used to iterate the initial instrument; *Personalized Micro-Learning Opportunities* implemented in this study.

Study Phase Three. The 185 participants that self-selected to initiate the intervention instrument, at any time in the study, were requested to complete a follow-up survey to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the experience to continue to iterate the intervention instrument in Phase Three (see [Appendix D](#) for Personalized Professional Development Experiences Feedback Survey). Questions focused on ease of process, financial compensation as motivator and transfer of learning to the classroom using a four-point Likert-type scale. Open-ended questions were asked to allow participants to explain thinking behind the closed-question responses. The data were also analyzed to determine the significance of choice and transfer-based compensation as motivators to professional development participation.

Data Analysis Procedures. After educators completed the surveys, the raw dataset were reviewed multiple times and coded for categories derived from both the literature and emerged from the qualitative answers using keyword analysis. “Keyword analysis is made possible by contemporary technological conditions, chiefly the increasing availability of electronic text material and the power of personal computers,” (Bourgeault, I & Dingwall, R., 2010). The coding is completed by researcher initially running the qualitative responses through an online text analyzer for the frequency of words and phrases. The analysis continues by completing searches for other responses using words with similar meanings and then coding the results. Coding is “the process of analyzing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way” (Creswell, 2015, p. 156). In keyword analysis, the prevalent word concepts are coded and clumped together. The initial, low-level coding helps to summarize the dense data and to focus on emerging themes.

The identified themes or “broad units of information that consisted of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186) proved to be a lynchpin in the research. *It cannot be understated the impact the keyword analysis had on the study and the iterations of the intervention instrument that followed.*

By its nature, action research “embraces and promotes emergent learning...allowing the theory to emerge from the action and interaction itself. The emergence of that change is an active and intrinsic component of the research process.” (Phelps, R and Hase S., 2002) From the keyword analysis, a theory began to emerge that had not yet been identified in the research on the key component that must be included in an instrument that successfully resulted in high levels of transfer of professional learning

to the classroom. Throughout Phase three, the instrument was validated against the key components and iterated until it met the requirements outlined.

Validity

Herr and Anderson define validity in action research as *process validity*, “to what extent problems are framed and solved in a manner that permits ongoing learning of the individual or system” (2005). The iterative nature of this study ensured “ongoing learning” by both the individual and system because each iteration was analyzed for ease of use and effectiveness of the intervention instrument as well as the key components iteratively identified in the keyword analysis of the qualitative data. Data were validated by triangulating the closed and open-ended results and identifying common or contradictory themes through triangulation and iterative analysis. Ivankova states “Mixed-Methods research helps enrich credibility and validity of the study results through informed integration of multiple quantitative and qualitative data sources” (2015). Both anticipated and unanticipated themes emerged. For example, it was expected that time would be a barrier to transfer of new learning from professional development to setting; however, it was not anticipated that online learning would have one of the lowest change-in-practice (transfer-to-setting) rates.

Protection of Participants

Personally identifiable information (like the name of the respondents) were kept separate from any analysis. A signed consent form was collected from follow-up survey participants (see [Appendix A](#) for Informed Consent Form). Confidentiality was maintained by limiting access to identifiable information (only primary investigator had access) on secure, password-protected servers with regular and secured back-up.

Limitations

Because the follow-up survey data were necessarily collected from educators that had self-selected to try a Personalized Professional Development Experience, it is possible that a change in policy that *required* change in practice versus seat time for compensation might affect future perceptual data. Also, early childhood and special educators were underrepresented in the initial survey results and were removed from analysis for the rest of the study.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

The purpose of this study, was to focus on how professional learning can be designed to meet the varied needs of all educators and ensure the application of learning to the classroom. A secondary outcome was to determine the importance of choice and financial compensation as motivation for transferring new learning to the classroom. This study used a Multistage Mixed-Methods Framework to collect and analyze data in an action research format.

In action research, establishing current reality is critical. Without a baseline to compare, it is impossible to determine if the intervention implemented is solving the stated problem, in this case, the transfer of new professional learning to the classroom. In the national average, 40 percent of educators do not transfer any new knowledge learned in professional development sessions into their classrooms (McDonald, 2014). In the self-reported baseline data collected for this study, 30 percent of educators reported transferring less than half of the knowledge gained in professional learning to their setting using the referenced in Professional Development and Needs Assessment Survey administered in April of 2018 (see Figure 2 for Percent of Professional Learning Transferred to Setting). While higher than the national average, this is still a large amount of professional learning going unutilized and subsequently a large number of students not benefiting.

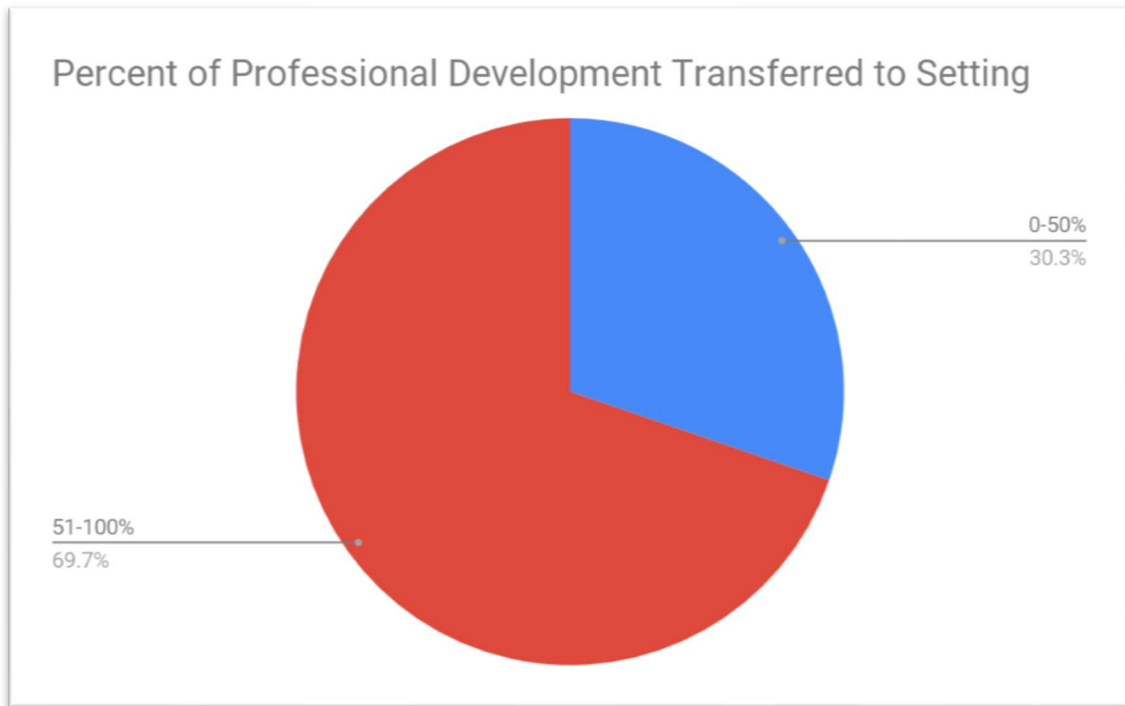


Figure 2. Percent of professional learning transferred to setting

Underlying Research Question 1: *How satisfied are educators with current professional development opportunities?*

Using a researcher designed electronic survey to establish current attitudes toward available professional learning, an analysis was conducted for each question to determine if there was a significant difference between the groups of educators with various years of experience in education and job assignments in the following areas:

- Satisfaction with current professional development options.
- Frequency of choice in topic of professional development learning.
- Choice in topic as a motivator to pursue professional development.
- Amount of transfer of professional development to setting based on the mode of learning.

(see [Appendix E](#) for Professional Learning Survey, April 2018)

There were fifteen individual questions on the survey with three collecting demographic information (level, years in education, job assignment), six using Likert-type scales collecting perceptual data around professional learning options, five opened-ended questions to further explain scaled answers, one checkbox grid to measure transfer of learning from different modes of professional development, and one multiple choice question about personalized learning awareness.

The following figures illustrate the satisfaction with current professional development offerings by years in education and by level of instruction. When analyzed by level from the four-point Likert-type scale, 84.6% (n=201) of elementary respondents selected, *“Through district offerings, I can usually/always find opportunities to reach my individual learning needs.”* The middle school respondent's percent dropped from elementary to 80.4% (n=107), and the percent of high school respondents that self-identified as always able to find opportunities to reach individual learning needs was 68% (n=153). Across all levels, 78.1% (n=461) of educators found professional development opportunities that meet their needs leaving nearly 25 percent of educators unable to do so with the district's current offerings (see Figure 3 for Satisfaction of Current Professional Development Offerings by Level). An inference was made that the drop from elementary to high-school teachers was based on the specificity of the courses they teach. While all elementary educators teach math, only a small portion of high school educators teach calculus. This specificity makes it more difficult for providers of professional development to meet the needs of teachers in more specialized areas.

Within district offerings, how often are you able to FIND development to help you reach your individual professional learning needs?

- Through district offerings, I can rarely/sometimes find opportunities to reach my learning needs
- Through district offerings, I can mostly/always find opportunities to reach my individual learning needs.

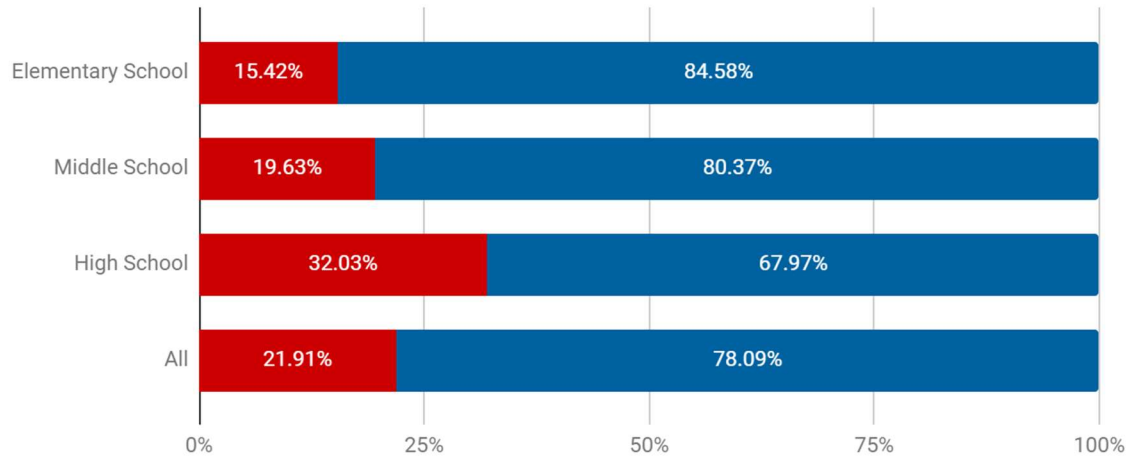


Figure 3. Satisfaction of current professional development offerings by level

The data demonstrate similar findings when organized by years of experience. Respondent educators in Years 1-3 report finding opportunities in district on the Likert-like scale with mostly or always 83.3% (n=42) of the time. The respondents that self-identified as being in Years 4-11 identified being able to find professional development opportunities in district that meets their needs 78.9% (n=159) of the time and in years 12-20 and those with 21+ years of experience in education, they report being able to find opportunities in district 78.9% (n=171) of the time and 72.3% (n=105) of the time, respectively (see Figure 4 for Satisfaction of Current Professional Development Offerings By Years in Education).

Within district offerings, how often are you able to FIND development to help you reach your individual professional learning needs?

- Through district offerings, I can rarely/sometimes find opportunities to reach my learning needs
- Through district offerings, I can mostly/always find opportunities to reach my individual learning nee...

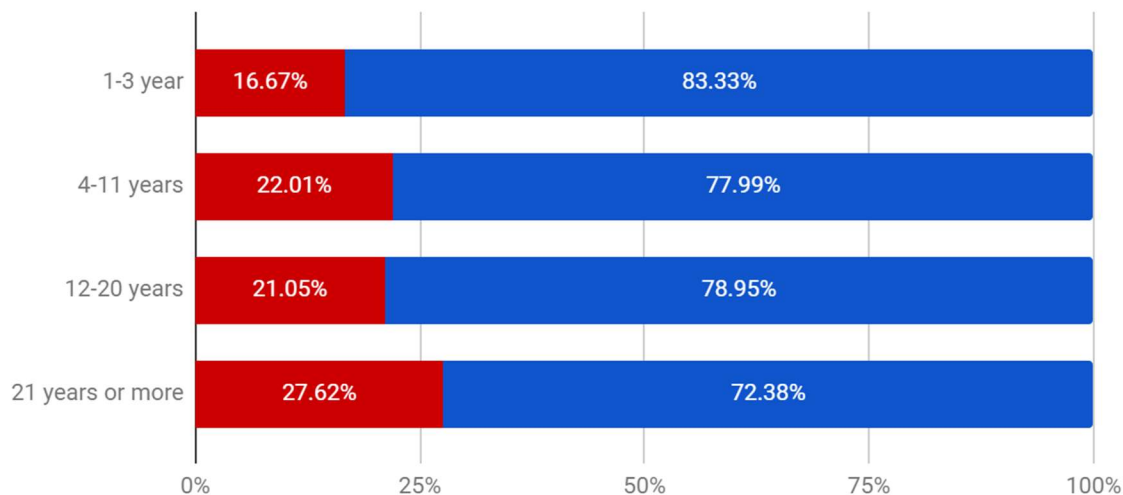


Figure 4. Satisfaction of current professional development offerings by years in education

Overall, most of both core and specialist educators that participated in the initial survey feel that professional development in district has been a good use of their time. It is important to note that 22 percent of core educators and 30 percent of specialist teachers moderately or strongly disagree that professional development in district has historically been a good use of their time (see Figure 5 for Professional Development as a Good Use of Time by Job Assignment). It is anticipated the lower number of satisfied specialist teachers have the same challenges as upper level high school educators, there are simply fewer of them teaching said area so less focus is spent on ensuring development is available to meet their needs.

Professional development in district has historically been a good use of my time.

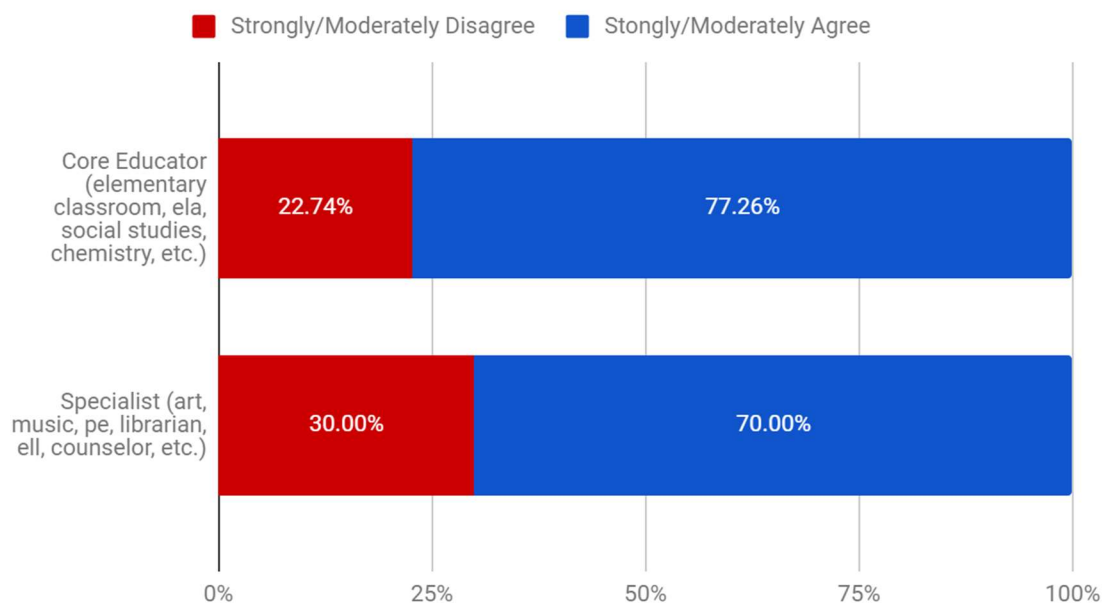


Figure 5. Professional development as a good use of time by job assignment

Underlying Research Question 2: *How incentivized are educators to participate in professional development when they have choice in topic?*

The survey demonstrated that a majority of respondent educators at all levels are able to choose topics of professional development in which they participate a majority of the time (see Figure 6 for Able to Select the Topic(s) of the Professional Development in Which You Participate).

In response to the question, “*How often are you able to select the topic(s) of the professional development in which you participate?*” when broken down by level, 76 percent of elementary respondent educators indicated they had a lot of choice, over 72 percent of middle school teachers, and 69 percent of high school educators indicated they were often or always able to choose the topics of the professional development in which they participate.

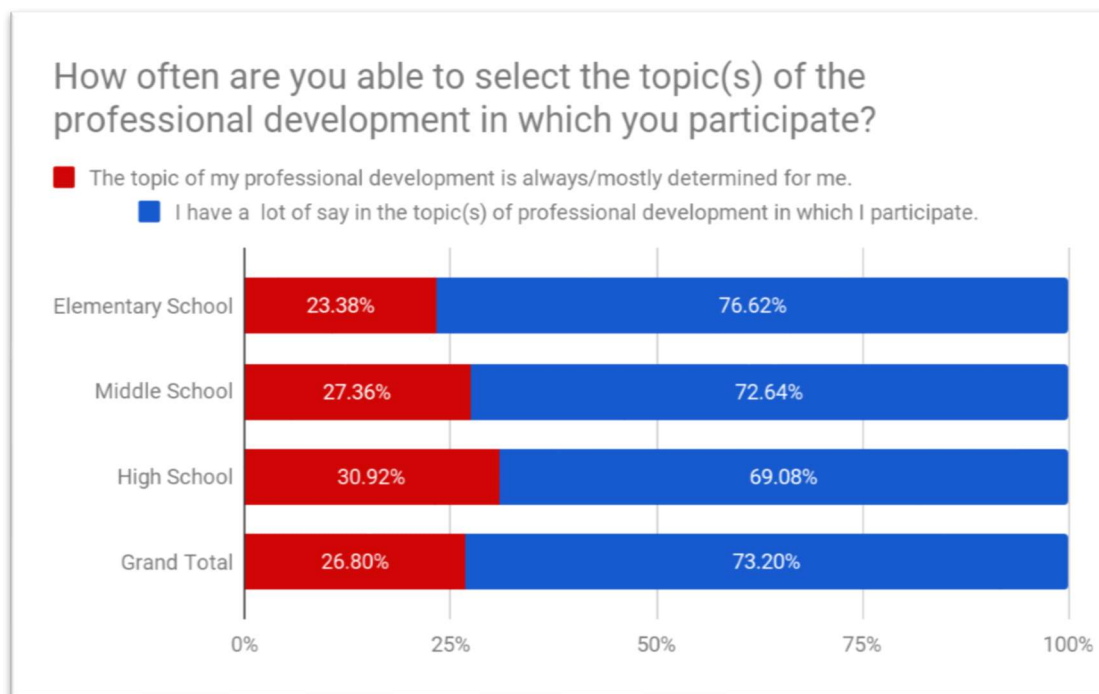


Figure 6. Able to select the topic(s) of the professional development in which you participate

The data on the likelihood of participation when choice was included, and the high percentage of respondents that indicated they had choice in current professional development, was incongruent with the qualitative answers naming the need for choice in topic as a key component supporting transferring learning to the classroom.

In this district, it is common practice for teachers to participate in peer-led courses during the summer. These courses are optional, and educators are encouraged to ‘choose’ which courses they participate. The disconnect in the qualitative answers included, “Many of the classes I’ve taken in the summer have been very beneficial. Historically, the PD given during the school year on release days or after winter break, have often been of no use, professionally,” (Teacher 18, Personalized Professional Learning Survey, April 2018) and “Classes I signed up for were meaningful

to me. In other words, I could immediately apply it to my classroom,” (Teacher 19, Personalized Professional Learning Survey, April 2018). Another teacher wrote, “When I get to choose (like the summer classes) it is very useful. The PD during the school year has never seemed productive,” If the question had been asked differently, for example, “*How beneficial is the professional development in which you are required to attend/do not select the topic?*” it is anticipated the results of the questions related to usefulness of professional development time would be much lower.

Key Finding on Choice. Another explanation is what is commonly referred to as ‘choice,’ was not really about being able to choose the topic of the development. Instead, it is the applicability of the topic to the needs of the teacher and students at the time the development takes place. It may not be having *choice* that matters. It may be the *applicability* of the learning to the educator’s setting that makes the difference in the level of transfer. The easiest way for educators to participate in professional development that applies to their setting is to allow teachers to ‘choose’ the topics of learning. Stated this way, it seems obvious: educators cannot transfer what does not apply to their content and students.

When asked, “*How much more likely you would be to participate in professional development if you were able to select the topic and mode of learning,*” 61.9 percent selected “*More Likely*” and an overwhelming 94.5 percent selected either “*More Likely*” or “*Much More Likely - I know what I need*” on the Likert-type scale (see Figure 7 for Impact of choice in professional development participation).

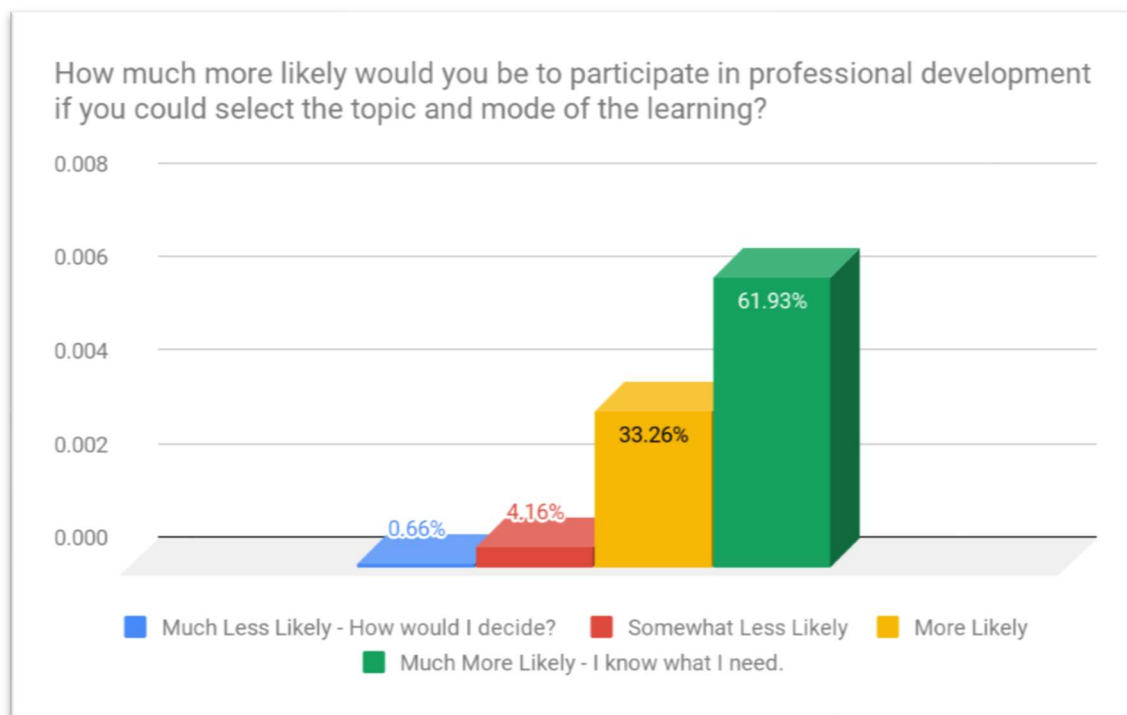


Figure 7. Impact of choice in professional development participation

Underlying Research Question 3: *How incentivized are educators to participate in professional development when they earn financial compensation for evidence of transfer of new learning?*

Results from the pre-pilot survey question asking, “If you received stipends/credit for demonstrating the transfer of new learning into your practice, how incentivized would you be to transfer new learning into your practice?” indicated financial compensation was a strong motivator for application to the classroom. When analyzed by both level and years in education between 77 percent and 90 percent of respondents indicated that financial compensation would incentivize them to transfer professional learning to their setting (see Figure 8 for Stipend to Incentivize Transfer by Level and Figure 9 for Stipend to incentivize transfer by years’ experience).

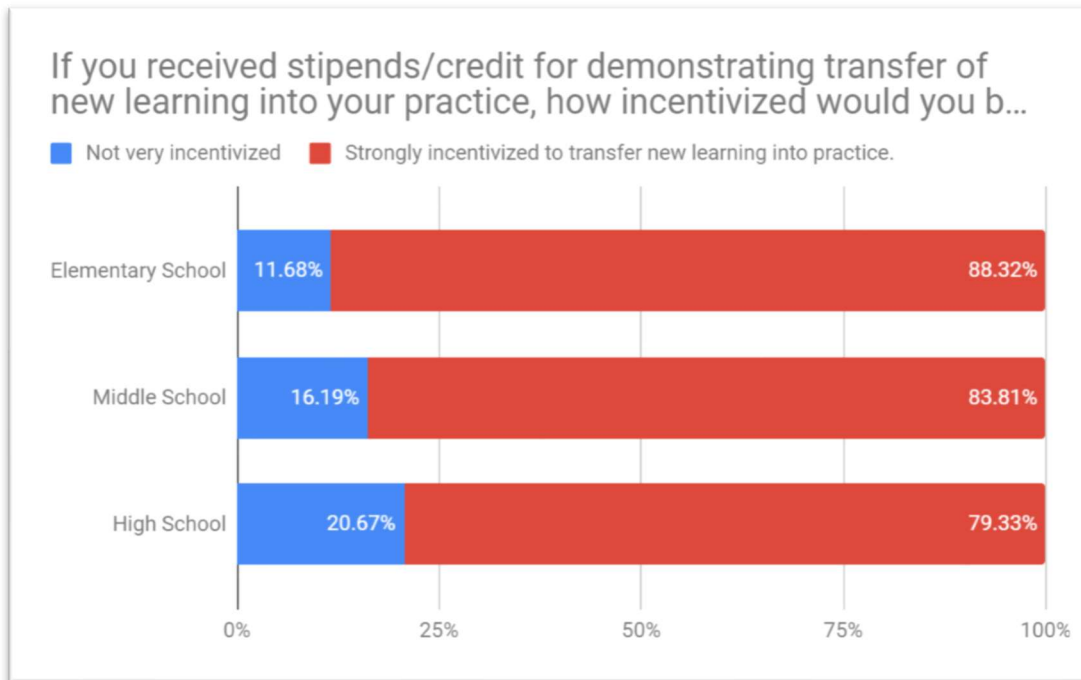


Figure 8. Stipend to incentivize transfer by level

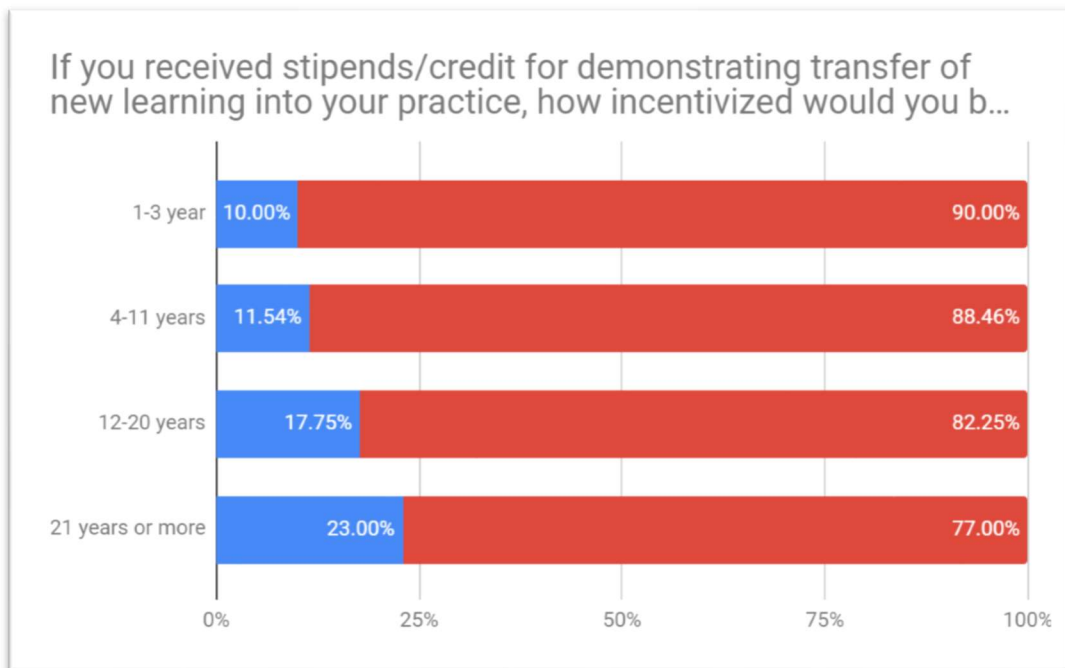


Figure 9. Stipend to incentivize transfer by years' experience

A similar question, “*How motivating was the ability to earn a stipend for a Personalized PD Experience?*” was asked on the follow-up survey of the 185 educators that self-selected to initiate a Personalized Professional Learning Experience (the intervention instrument) for comparison (see [Appendix D](#) for Personalized PD Experience Feedback).

Ninety-five percent of respondents on the follow-up survey noted that financial compensation was quite motivating or *the* motivating reason to transfer the learning to their setting (see Figure 10 for Stipend as motivation to complete a personalized professional development experience). One participant noted, “It was nice to try something new in my classroom and get compensated for my extra efforts and new learning,” (Teacher 20, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, September 25, 2018). Another commented, “I loved this! It let me get paid for something I wanted to do. Getting the stipend was extra motivation to get it done,” (Teacher 21, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, October 13, 2018).

Other participants responded that while compensation was not the primary motivator, it was appreciated by commenting, “it is nice just to be recognized for trying something new that improves my professional practice,” (Teacher 22, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, November 16, 2018) and “while I would pursue opportunities for PD that do not have a stipend, it is nice to be paid for your time when it is so precious,” (Teacher 23, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, October 17, 2018). Finally, one participant endorsed this as a best practice, “This is awesome. Getting people to try new things by bribing them with money is probably dollar for dollar the best way to improve teaching. A lot of the larger PDs are nice but leave little time to

work on implementation. I like that implementation is the direct goal of this,” (Teacher 24, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, January 7, 2019).

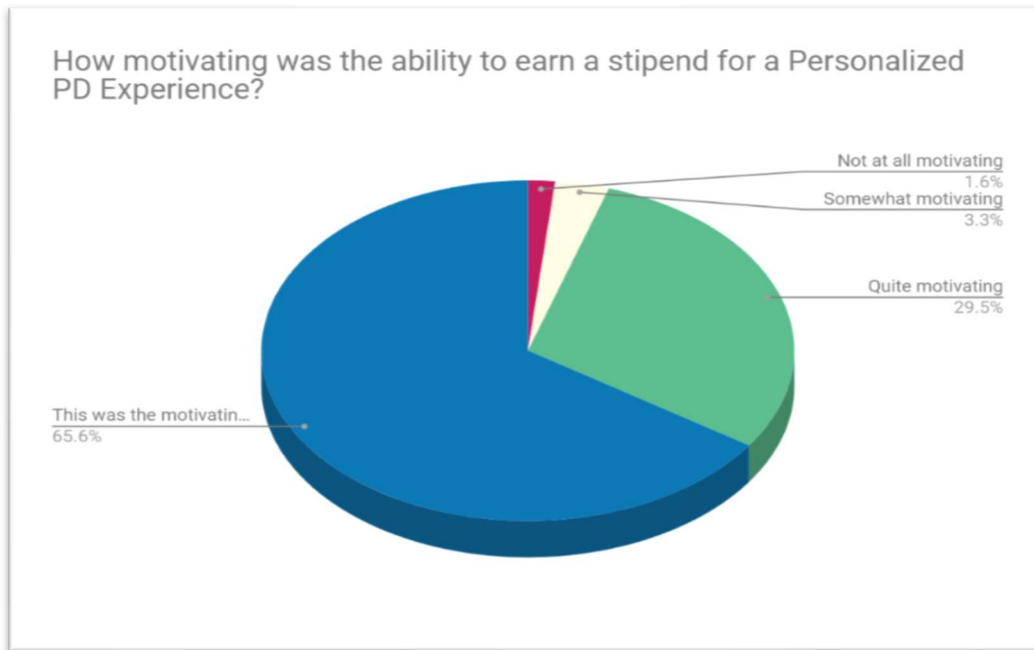


Figure 10. Stipend as motivation to complete a personalized professional development experience

Overarching Research Question: *How can professional learning be designed to meet the varied needs of all educators and ensure the application of learning to the classroom?*

Results from Phase Two. To address the overarching research question, findings from the keyword analytics of the 323 narrative responses to the open-ended survey question, “*Please describe what supports the transfer of new learning into your practice following professional development experiences?*” proved to be a significant catalyst in the second iteration of the intervention instrument (see [Appendix E](#) for Personalized PD Survey April 2018).

Until this point in the research, the intervention instrument focused on addressing the concerns of educators dissatisfied with current district professional learning options collected on the pre-study Professional Development Survey, Winter 2017 including:

1. *Not being paid for participating in or the cost to participate in professional development.*
2. The lack of professional development relevant to their content.
3. The fixed times professional development was available.

(see [Appendix E](#) for Professional Development Survey)

The keyword analytics method of coding and categorizing of the data collected on the second large scale survey in Phase Two, *Personalized Professional Development Survey, April 2018*, surfaced the same three themes as the previous survey but a fourth theme iteratively emerged: if the transfer of learning is to be guaranteed from professional learning to the classroom, it must be built into the process. The four themes identified as key components for the intervention instrument were:

1. Topics of study must meet the current teacher needs of students, content, and pedagogy for teachers to transfer.
2. Flexibility in the mode of learning (online/in-person, individual/group) is key to application to the classroom.
3. Flexibility in timeline (due dates) is key to application to the classroom.
4. If transfer is to be guaranteed, it must be built into the process.

(see Table 4 Keyword Analysis and Resultant Key Components).

Table 4

Keyword Analysis and Resultant Key Components

Keywords	Prevalence in Responses	Resultant Theme
use, transfer, apply, implement, practice, follow up, try, plan, using, practicing, account, time to work, prepare, develop	61.61%	Transfer doesn't happen incidentally. If transfer is to be guaranteed, it must be built into the process.
choice, need, authentic, relevance, relevant, current, direct, impact, content, immediate, improve, applicable, needs of my, choose, students, topics, curriculum, practical, area, classroom, discipline, what I teach	43.34%	Topics of study must meet the current teacher needs of students, content, and pedagogy for teachers to transfer.
flexibility, due, pace, finished	34.37%	Flexibility in timeline (due dates) is key to application to the classroom.
peer, colleague(s), team, collaborate, online, support, with, CLT, PLC, people, group, cohort, grade, department, work with, others, share, teachers	25.70%	Flexibility in the mode of learning (online/in-person, individual/group) is key to application to the classroom.

The Personalized Professional Development Survey, April 2018 also collected specific data on which modes of Professional Development led to the transfer of professional learning into the classroom (see [Appendix E](#) for Personalized Professional Learning Survey, April 2018). Respondents identified from seven possible modes of learning the amount of learning transferred to their classroom. *Individual Learning on Self-Selected Topics* had the highest level of transfer at 80.23 percent (see Figure 11 for Mode of professional development that led to the most transfer of learning). It is interesting to note that *Online, Self-Paced Courses* had the second lowest level of transfer at 63.19 percent and *Coaching Cycles* had the lowest perceived level of transfer at 58.33 percent.

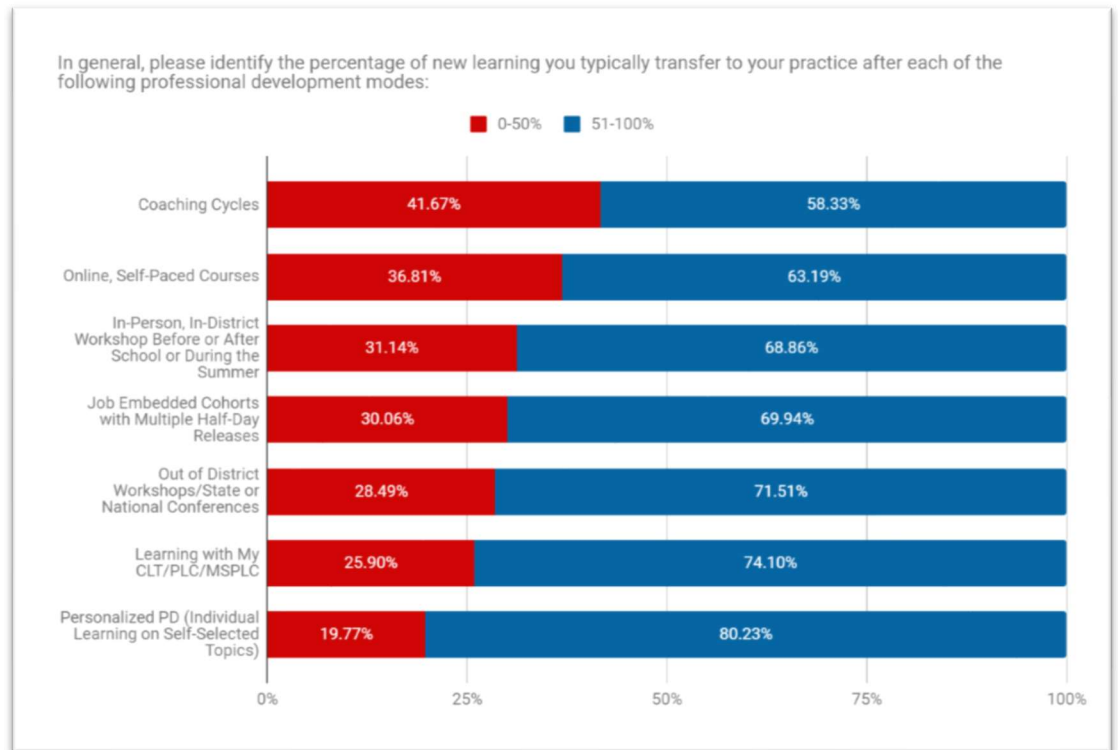


Figure 11. Mode of professional development that led to the most transfer of learning

To measure the invention instrument iterations against the key themes identified, an evaluation tool was developed to measure the potential success of future iterations (see Table 5 for Critical Components to Evaluate Intervention Instrument).

Table 5

Critical Components to Evaluate Intervention Instrument

For a professional learning process to ensure transfer to the classroom and relevant learning for all educators, the following must be true:	Present? Yes or No
1. Transfer of professional learning to the classroom must be at the core of the process.	
2. Educators must have choice in the topics of study to meet the current needs of their students, content, and pedagogy.	
3. Intervention instrument should include a financial incentive for educators to participate.	
4. Intervention instrument must allow for flexibility in the timeline (due dates) and mode of learning (online/in-person, individual/group).	

Iteration II. Being unable to offer, or find a vendor that could provide, learning on the nearly infinite number of topics educators wanted and needed required a fundamental shift in process. This was achieved in iteration ii by shifting from a process that provided content to one that focused only on process. This conceptual change resulted in the *Personalized Professional Development Experience: You Name the Learning* intervention instrument (see [Appendix G](#)).

To earn a stipend in this new process, educators submitted an electronic form title *Request for Approval* to the Coordinator of Talent Development identifying both the learning topic and the resources to be used to acquire the learning (see [Appendix H](#) for *Request for Approval*). After the educator received approval, they independently completed their learning. Finally, the educator summarized their new learning and submitted evidence of transfer to the classroom in the form of pictures, video or student assignments. A rubric articulated the expectations for each step is summarized below.

Step 1: Submit Idea to District Professional Development Coordinator

- Identify the desired learning topic and the researched-based resource(s) to be used.

Step 2: Acquire New Learning

- After resource(s) are approved, acquire new learning.

Step 3: Make Meaning and Transfer Learning to Classroom

- Through written reflection, visual artifact, and/or video:
 - summarize key learning points.
 - submit evidence of how new learning was applied to classroom.
 - share reflections and takeaways from application.
- Submit to District Professional Development Coordinator for review.

(see [Appendix G](#) for Personalized Professional Development Experience: You
Name the Learning)

Allowing educators to identify the resources and submit evidence of transfer for compensation was instrumental in making the professional learning model meet the learning needs of all educators. Any educator, teaching any subject PK-12, with any student need in their setting, could participate in pertinent learning on demand. Evidence of application was at the core, and because the educator was designing the learning, it could be completed on or offline, individually or with a group meeting all of the identified Key Themes.

Results from Phase Three. As previously outlined, Phase Three focused on iterating the intervention instrument based on ongoing field-testing and data collection (see Figure 1 for Model for multi-stage mixed methods framework for study).

Figure 1. Model for multistage mixed-methods framework for study

Beginning in Phase Two, April 2018, a survey was electronically distributed to each educator that initiated a *Request for Approval* to begin a Personalized Professional Development Experience (the intervention instrument) (see [Appendix D](#) for Personalized PD Experience Feedback).

There were eight initial questions on the survey that were asked of all respondents including one open-ended question to determine motivation to begin a Personalized Professional Experience (intervention instrument), three using Likert-type scales collecting perceptual data around the Personalized Professional Development Experience (intervention instrument), three open-ended questions requesting narrative responses to explain scaled answers further, and one multiple choice question to determine if participant completed the Personalized Professional Development Experience (see [Appendix D](#) for Personalized PD Experience Feedback). Based on if an educator answered *yes* or *no* to the question, “*Did you complete your Personalized Learning Experience?*” the respondent was asked different sets of questions. Participants that completed the Personalized Professional Development were asked four Likert-type scale questions analyzing the ease of use of the intervention instrument. Finally, three open-ended questions were asked to explain scaled answers further and offer suggestions for improvement to the intervention instrument. For participants that did not complete the Personalized Professional Development Experience, three open-ended questions were asked to solicit feedback for revisions to the intervention instrument that would lead to successful completion for the individual. One Likert-type scale question was asked to

indicate how likely the respondent was to try another Personalized Professional Development Experience.

Iteration III. The challenge of this iteration of the intervention instrument proved to be the completion rate. While the compensation amount, \$300, was a considerable stipend, the requirement to demonstrate transfer-of -learning to the classroom was new to most educators and was a significant increase in the amount of work compared to earning the same amount of money based on the traditional system of compensation-for-seat-time (attendance). Comments like, “this is such a wonderful new addition! However, it's overwhelming for many,” (Teacher 25, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, 2019) and “I will try it again. I think if I do it a few times I will get over the feeling of it being extra and I will find a way to make it part of my reflective process. The stipend is a good incentive,” (Teacher 26, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, 2019) showed that even teachers that were willing to complete the entire process recognized that this was a significant amount of work.

A unique adjustment was implemented to address the completion rate concern. This was the second conceptual change that moved the interventional instrument forward. Instead of thinking about the entire process as a single learning event, it was divided into tiers. Each tier built on the previous with educators determining at which level of learning they were interested in pursuing. Successful completion of *each* tier earned incremental compensation. Successful completion of *all* four tiers earned \$300. A detailed explanation of the tiered process is below:

Tier 1-Evidence of LEARNING

- After initial approval of an area of study and resources to be used, educators summarize and make meaning of new learning via a 500-600 word reflection or a 2-3 minute video.
- One resource may be a professional development session attended, a visit to an industry site, museum, etc., but the other must be a researched-based professional resource.
- The summary and reflection are submitted to the district for approval.
- Successful completion earns the educator \$75. Because there is a low level of guaranteed transfer at this tier, educators may not exceed four Tier 1 submissions every three years.

Learning is the foundation for any professional development and yet, very few times are educators asked to identify their key takeaways and understandings from professional development sessions.

Tier 2-Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION

- At the Implementation tier, the educator submits artifacts demonstrating implementation of the new learning (in the form of pictures, work samples, anchor charts, whole/small group video, lesson plans, etc.) and a minimum of 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 minute video identifying the desired outcome, explaining the artifact(s) submitted and identifying the connection to curriculum or professional best practices.
- Completion of Tier 1 and 2 together is submitted for \$150 and is not to exceed three Tier 2 submissions every three years.

Without implementation, transfer to setting, or change in practice, students are not benefitting from professional learning in which educators participate. Evidence of implementation is what makes this process more powerful than traditional professional development.

Tier 3-Evidence of IMPACT

- Compensation is awarded at this tier for implementing a measurement tool and reflecting on the results via a 1-2 minute video or a 250-350 word reflection.
- For compensation at this tier, it does not matter if the data results are positive or negative.
- Completion of Tiers 1-3 earns \$225. Educators are not to exceed three Tier 3 as final submissions a year.

Tier 3 has the most impact on Professional Learning Communities. Hattie identified in his Visible Learning meta-analysis, almost everything we do in education works, it just doesn't all work to the same effect size (Hattie, 2012). By making *measuring the impact of a change in practice* a component in the professional development process, educators can locally determine the best practices with their students and share with members of their Professional Learning Community and accurately demonstrate the impact of the implemented change in practice. Not every change yields positive results, and even worthwhile changes in practice may not yield positive results on the first attempt, but by including measurement and data in the professional development model, it provides data to determine if districts are spending

professional development time and dollars on the practices that positively impact learning for students.

Tier 4-Evidence of SHARING with others

- At Tier 4, educators share their practice in a way that other educators can follow behind them and implement to their setting.
- Through a 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 minute video, educators summarize and share lessons learned and next steps in their practice.
- Completion of all four tiers results in an educator earning \$300.

This tier captures the learning and findings of individual educators to the benefit of colleagues.

Iteration IV. The final key theme identified was the intervention instrument must allow for flexibility in the timeline (due dates) and mode of learning (online/in-person, individual/group). This theme proved to be the simplest, and most apparent, tweak of the entire study: remove deadlines for submission. It was an artificial rule to think learning had to be submitted at the end of each semester (fall, spring, summer). By changing to an open submission timeline, the process addressed all critical components on the evaluation tool (see Table 5 above for Critical Components to Evaluate Intervention Instrument).

The final iteration was communication and marketing based, not process based. Because educators were unused to having the ability lead their own development, on the topic of their choosing, they needed a handbook, or guide, to move them through the process step-by-step. The Tiered Personalized Professional Development Handbook outlined the four steps in the process (see [Appendix J](#) for Handbook). To organize the

reflections and artifacts, a Personalized Professional Development Response Guide was developed (see [Appendix K](#)). Each page of the Response Guide listed that expectations of the tier through a rubric and provided a blank table for the educator to use to type reflections and link artifacts. The handbook was submitted as one document to the Office of Talent Development for scoring.

Steps in final intervention instrument:

Step 1: Submit Idea using Proposal Submission Form

- Submit proposal identifying learning focus and two professional resources.
- Do not proceed with learning until you hear from the Talent Development Coordinator.

Step 2: Engage in Learning and Complete Tier Requirements

- Organize your work on the Personalized PD Response Template

Step 3: Submit Tiers for Review

- When complete, upload and submit your work to the Personalized PD

Final Submission form.

- Submission(s) are reviewed by District Professional Development Coordinator.

Step 4: Credit or Stipend Awarded

- When your submission is approved, credit or stipend is awarded.

Chapter 5: Discussion: Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

Nearly twenty years ago, Guskey commented “a lot of good things are done in the name of professional development. But so are a lot of rotten things. What educators haven't done is provide evidence to document the difference between the two” (2002).

For almost two decades, legislators and policymakers have reviewed “what schools spend on professional development and want to know, ‘Does the investment yield tangible payoffs or could that money be spent in better ways?’” (Guskey, 2002). In his 2002 model identifying the five critical levels of professional development evaluation, Guskey outlined a process to evaluate professional development. The levels include:

Level 1: Participants' Reactions

Level 2: Participants' Learning

Level 3: Organization Support and Change

Level 4: Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills

Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes (2002)

To measure each level, Guskey suggests questionnaires, direct observations, minutes from follow-up meetings, and reviewing video or audiotapes (2002). Nearly seventeen years later, few districts have implemented the five critical levels, primarily because districts do not have the money, time, or manpower to do the follow-up data collection in the way Guskey suggests. As he acknowledges, “with each succeeding level, the process of gathering evaluation information gets a bit more complex. And

because each level builds on those that come before, success at one level is usually necessary for success at higher levels” (Guskey 2002).

This study took the opposite approach of Guskey. Instead of focusing on professional development at a program or district level, it focused on the transfer of new professional learning at the individual teacher level. Large scale, one-size-fits-all professional development will always leave some educators unable to apply the learning to the content, classes, or students they teach. “Professional development affects student achievement through three steps. First, professional development enhances teacher knowledge and skills. Second, better knowledge and skills improve classroom teaching. Third, improved teaching raises student achievement. If one link is weak or missing, better student learning cannot be expected. If a teacher fails to apply new ideas from professional development to classroom instruction, for example, students will not benefit from the teacher’s professional development” (Lavy, 2007, pg. 4). By researching the processes and motivators that cause educators to transfer professional learning into her/her individual setting with an instrument that ensured the learning in which educators participate is meaningful and transfers to the classroom, this research required many fewer district resources to monitor but still maintains the end goal of improved student outcomes.

This research was completed at a large suburban Midwestern district during the 2017 and 2018 calendar years with an intervention instrument field-tested and iterated multiple times for effectiveness. In this final chapter, the research questions are revisited and the findings on the processes and motivators that led to educators transferring learning from professional development to the classroom are summarized.

Research Questions Answered

Underlying Research Question 1: *How satisfied are educators with current professional development opportunities?*

Nationally, only “29 percent of teachers are highly satisfied with current professional development offerings” (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2014). The findings in this study were similar the national average with 34 percent of educators selecting the highest level of satisfaction (*Always= 4*) on a Likert-type scale in response to the question, “*Within district offerings, how often are you able to FIND development to help you reach your individual professional learning needs?*” When combined with the educators that selected the second highest level (*Mostly=3*), 78 percent of educators selected they could find professional development offerings help reach their individual professional learning needs. While a large majority of educators self-identified as successfully finding offerings to meet their individual learning needs, nearly a quarter, 22 percent of educators selected the lower two levels (*Only Sometimes=2, Rarely=1*) struggling to find development to help reach their individual professional learning needs. If educators participate in professional learning that does not apply to their content, classes, or students even once a year, it is time and funds wasted at the expense of students. Because in the final iteration of the intervention tool, educators selected the topic(s), 100 percent of educators were able to participate in learning that met their individual learning needs no matter the subject, level, or needs of students in their classes.

Underlying Research Question 2: *How incentivized are educators to in professional development when they have choice in topic?*

Nearly 95 percent educators in the study indicated that choice was a motivator in participating in professional development in response to the question, *“How much more likely you would be to participate in professional development if you were able to select the topic and mode of learning,”*

Interestingly, when asked how often they were able to choose their own professional learning topics a high number, 73.2 percent, indicated they were able to select the topics in which they participate most or all of the time. This seemingly incongruent finding was addressed in the qualitative answers expressing the need for choice in learning as a critical component of effective professional development.

When digging deeper into the meaning of choice, it became obvious that while *choice* was the most common term educators used in expressing what they need in professional development, the real need was applicability. “Meaningful learning opportunities that help teachers transfer and apply new knowledge to their classrooms” (Appova, 2017) is what leads to change in practice. Teachers can only apply new learning to their classrooms if it is connected to the subject, class, or students in their charge. For example, a district may offer a wide variety of choices of professional development sessions from which a teacher can select, but if they do not apply to her setting, having choice is useless.

Underlying Research Question 3: *How incentivized are educators to participate in professional development when they earn financial compensation for evidence of transfer of new learning?*

The district referenced in the study currently awards stipends for educator's attendance at professional development events at \$25 per hour of attendance. This type of pay-for-seat-time professional development does not require, or even encourage, educators to transfer their learning. (Appova, 2017). Within the historical model, there was no accountability for using the knowledge gained, no follow-up to check for application, and no coaching dedicated to support implementation of new learning. Likewise, not all financial compensation motivates educators to participate in professional development, especially if it involves giving up time on the weekends. This is particularly true for educators with young families. “I work 5 days a week. I have a young daughter. I only have two mornings with her [weekends], and they wanted me to give one up. They were paying, but it wasn’t worth it’ (Grace, mid-career, junior high),” (Appova, 2017).

Seventy-nine percent of educators participating in this study indicated they would be strongly incentivized by earning a stipend in return for demonstrating evidence of transfer of their new learning into their classroom and 95 percent of educators that completed a Personalized Professional Development experience indicated it was quite or *the* motivating factor in completing the process.

The conceptual shift utilized in this study of awarding educators a stipend *after* demonstration of application to their classroom was novel and proved much less controversial than anticipated. There was only one qualitative response that named the

change as an issue, “In order to receive the stipend I have become accustomed to, I have to jump through many more hoops beyond my attendance,” (Teacher 27, Personalized PD Experiences Feedback Survey, 2019). The comment itself, demonstrates why moving in this direction has benefits for how district monies are spent.

By making application of the learning central to the process implementation was not left to chance. Educators were required to formally reflect and make meaning of the learning to determine how to best implement the new practice(s) into their classroom because the compensation was not awarded until artifacts from the classroom were submitted. Due to the transfer requirement, educators were incentivized to reach out to colleagues or instructional coaches for support if they were struggling to *implement* or in need of support on how they might *measure* the impact of the new practice(s). Requiring data be collected at Tier 3, but not preventing teachers from earning the stipend for data that did not produce immediate and positive results, appeared to supported the best practice of failing forward and risk-taking often spouted as desired practices in education but rarely rewarded .

In the previous model utilized in the district, without additional surveys, observations, and time-consuming follow-ups there was no way to measure the implementation from traditional professional developments sessions and therefore, it was difficult to determine the correlation between professional development monies spend and the benefit to students in the classroom. The nature of the intervention instrument required educators to submit evidence of transfer, increasing the chances of students benefitting.

Overarching Research Question of Study Asked: *How can professional learning be designed to meet the varied needs of all educators and ensure the application of learning to the classroom?*

A conclusion of this study is that *time*, the most often cited reason for professional development not transferring to the classroom, isn't the barrier that many might think. As surveys showed, if educators can select the learning that is most pertinent to the student needs or content in front of them, many will find the time to implement the practices.

The challenge for districts is how to create learning opportunities that allow for all educators to participate in the learning that is most pertinent to them. This research determined four key themes that must be present for professional learning to meet the varied needs of all educators and ensure the application of learning to the classroom. They include:

1. Topics of study must meet the current teacher needs of students, content, and pedagogy for teachers to transfer.
2. Flexibility in the mode of learning (online/in-person, individual/group) is key to application to the classroom.
3. Flexibility in timeline (due dates) is key to application to the classroom.
4. If transfer is to be guaranteed, it must be built into the process.

(see Table 4 Keyword Analysis and Resultant Key Components)

By designing a professional development instrument that successfully addressed these four key components this study proved there is a way to ensure transfer of learning

to classrooms from professional development within the current manpower and funding in a district.

Implications for School Districts and Further Research

This study's results have implications for professional development researchers, educators, and educational stakeholders. The findings point to the need to repurpose professional development funds to allow teachers to lead learning for themselves to meet the needs of their students, content, and classes for multiple reasons. First, there is little to gain from expensive third party one-size-fits-all learning speakers and/or programs that do not apply to all educators. Second, there is limited transfer when a professional development learning event does not include structured support for implementation to the classroom. A natural progression for further research would be to investigate the types of support that lead to the most transfer of new learning. Is instructional coaching as a requirement of attending a professional development session as effective as a stipend? Is a written plan submitted to the evaluating administrator as effective as financial incentive? Finally, can this model of Personalized Professional Development be mandated for all educators and maintain the same level of satisfaction educators that self-selected to participate reported?

Conclusion

Teachers are und need a compelling reason to change practice (Top 10 Most Stressful Jobs, n.d.). In the researchers experience, when processes are utilized that guarantee learning is applicable, and overworked educators are rewarded for the extra time and energy it takes to implement new practices, we can move much faster from the best practices found in research to the everyday practices found in classrooms. We need

to stop measuring the wedding and start measuring the marriage. The professional development event (the wedding) should only be seen as Step 1 in a multi-step process of learning, transfer, and reflection (the marriage). This research has proven that the applicability of the learning is key to educators finding worth in the development in which they participate.

Appendix

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form



Division of College of Education
One University Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Impact of Choice in Topic Professional Learning and Method of Compensation in Applying Professional Learning to an Educator's Setting

Participant _____

HSC Approval Number 1118042-1

Principal Investigator: Amy Geurkink-Coats

PI's Phone Number 314-409-3997

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Amy Geurkink-Coats, Phyllis Balcerzak, and Ralph Cordova. The purpose of this research is to focus on the motivators that cause educators to transfer professional learning into her/her individual setting.

- a. a) Your participation will involve:

- Completion of a minimum of two digital surveys identifying motivational and attitudinal behaviors around professional learning.
- Participation in a researcher developed instrument: Personalized Professional Learning project.
- Offering of formative feedback and suggestions for future iterations of instrument.
- Potential to participate in an interview measuring changes in disposition toward professional learning and willingness to change practice based on the ability to self-select professional learning topics and financial compensation for levels of transfer into classroom practice (i.e. higher levels of transfer equals higher levels of compensation.)
- Survey data will be sent to 1300 educators, interview data will be collected from up to 30 educators.

- b. The amount of time involved in your participation will be:

- up to twenty minutes for each survey.
- up to thirty minutes for interview.
- up to twelve hours for completion of Personal Professional Learning project.

Please note: Participants will not receive any financial, or other compensation, for the participation in the research components of this study.

2. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
3. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to:
- the knowledge about the perceived importance of choice in topics and mode of professional learning in applying professional learning to an educator's setting.
 - an increase in implementation of professional learning when compensation is based on evidence of transfer versus seat time hours.
4. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

5. By agreeing to participate, you understand and agree that your data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your identity will not be revealed. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your data. In addition, all data will be stored on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked office.
6. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may contact investigators, Amy Geurkink-Coats, acoats@parkwayschools.net, 314-409-3997, Ralph Cordova, cordovar@umsl.edu, 314-516-5799, or Phyllis Balcerzak, balcerzakph@umsl.edu, 314-516-5944. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 314-516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records.

I consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature

Participant's Printed Name Date

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Investigator/Designee Printed Name Date

Appendix B: Previously Administered Professional Learning Survey

Professional Development Evaluation Educator Survey 2017

Level

Preschool
Elementary
Middle
High
SpEd

Years in education

<1-4
5-10
11-16
17+

Years in District

<1-4
5-10
11-16
17+

Topic 1: Effectiveness of Professional Development

The Professional Learning I attend in district positively impacts my students.

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

In general, how much of the Professional Learning attended in district do you incorporate in your classroom?

Less than 25%
25-50%
52-75%
76-100%

The Professional Learning I sign up to take for my 3 in 3 is related to my Professional Growth Plan.

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Why or why not?

Open text box

Topic 2: Opportunities for All Educators

The most effective professional learning model for me to transfer learning into my setting is... (Select all that apply.)

In person
Online
Hybrid (combination of in person and online)
During the Summer
Before/After School
With my instructional coach
With my CLT/PLC/MSPLC team
With my team/department
With a cohort of other teachers
With my curriculum coordinator
On my own
Other:

There are enough professional learning opportunities offered in district to help me reach my individual learning goals.

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Why or why not?

Open text box

On what topic(s) are you interested in learning?

Open text box

What professional learning has been most valuable for you in the last 1-5 years.

Open text box

What made/makes this learning valuable?

Open text box

Topic 3: Time to Learn

I have enough time to transfer apply new professional learning into my setting.

Yes
No

If no, what gets in your way?

Open text box

Time for professional learning is well spaced throughout the school year.

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

What would you consider the ideal professional learning schedule for your setting?

Open text box

Topic 4: PLC/CLT/MSPLC

PLC/CLT/MSPLC is an effective development time for me as a professional.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

The work we accomplish in my CLT/PLC/MSPLC benefits my students.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

I am held accountable for the PLC cycle and the work we accomplish.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Administrators need to have an active role in driving the work of my PLC/CLT/MSPLC.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please add any additional thoughts on PLC/CLT/MSPLCs.

Open text box

Appendix C: Initial Intervention Instrument

From Inputs to Outputs: Personalized Micro Learning Opportunities



Professional development systems have historically focused on quality *inputs* (usually inservices or conferences) to improve professional practice. In the digital age, we can add chunked, individualized learnings to our professional development repertoire focused on *outputs* (evidence of application of new learning to own setting) known as micro-credentials.

The idea refers to bite-sized competencies that, via samples of student work, videos, and other artifacts, educators show to prove mastery. Then, in vetting each educator's submission, the micro-credentials authorizer either asks the teacher to go back and dig deeper or approves the submission to earn in-service credit or \$75 stipend. A side benefit is the development of a local depository of in-house learnings and shared applications with colleagues.

Personalized Micro Learning Opportunities are the next step in meeting the needs of all educators because...

When our educators are learning, so are our students.

Read more from edweek [HERE](#).

Why are we offering Personalized Micro Learning opportunities?

- Spark new learning in flexible environments
- Encourage “just in time” learning to improve pedagogy
- Increase choices of development options
- Increase implementation of new learning to own setting
- Build a virtual library of internal learning and best practices in action
- Honor the learning and work educators are currently engaged in completing

What are Personalized Micro Learning Opportunities?

- There are three steps in the process:

Step 1: Submit Idea

- Identify learning focus and resource (micro-credential)
- Submit for approval to Talent Development Coordinator

Step 2: Acquire New Learning

- After resource is approved, acquire new learning

Step 3: Make Meaning and Transfer Learning to own setting

- Submit proof of micro-credential successful completion and through writing, artifact, and/or video (generally 300-500 words or 2-3 min. video)
 - summarize key learning points.
 - show how new learning was applied to setting.
 - share reflections.
- Submit for review to Talent Development Coordinator

click to [HERE](#) return to research

Appendix D: Personalized Professional Development Experiences Feedback Survey

(revised)

First, thank you for showing an interest in a Personalized Professional Development Experience. We are continually learning, revising, updating and improving our process to be both streamlined and clear.

Your insights are invaluable and I ask that you please complete the below questions honestly to help us identify strengths and areas we need to continue to revise.

Thank you so much!



1. Consent for Research THIS SECTION WILL BE SEPARATED FROM YOUR ANSWERS. ALL ANSWERS WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

By typing my name below, I acknowledge that I have reviewed the linked Informed Consent document and give my consent for the data to be used for the identified research:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/138cB9NJjmUBbAoc8IGS3fBMaG6fXGvaxTo7aepFmeqk/edit>

2. What first appealed to you about the Personalized Professional Development Experience?

3. How useful and clear did you find the Personalized Professional Learning Handbook explaining the overall process?

If interested, you can access the handbook here: <https://tinyurl.com/ParkwayPersonalizedPD>
Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Very Cumbersome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Clear

4. What suggestions do you have for the Handbook?

5. How motivating was the ability to earn a stipend for a Personalized PD Experience?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all motivating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	This was the motivating factor

6. Please explain answer above.

7. How streamlined/appropriate did you find the initial APPROVAL process?

This is the google form requesting: topic of study, goal/outcome, resources, learning plan, and Domain of Professional Practice. If interested, you can access here:

<https://tinyurl.com/RequestforApproval>

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Very Cumbersome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Streamlined

8. What suggestions do you have for the initial APPROVAL process?

9. Did you complete the Personalized PD Experience?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes *Skip to question 14.*
- ☐ No *Skip to question 10.*

Did Not Complete Personalized PD Experience

10. What got in your way? What would/could help you move to the next step?

11. The Final Response Template has gone through many iterations. Please click the link below to review. What suggestions do you have for the FINAL SUBMISSION TEMPLATE, ARTIFACTS & REFLECTIONS or RUBRICS?

If willing, please review the current iteration and offer your suggestions:
<https://tinyurl.com/FinalResponseTemplate> (will ask you to make a copy)

12. How likely are you to complete the Personalized Professional Development Experience you started?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all likely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I will complete it

13. What else would you like to add about the Personalized Professional Development process that you have not had the opportunity to share?

Stop filling out this form.

Completed Personalized PD Experience

14. How clear did you find the RUBRICS?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Confusing and Unhelpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Clarifying and Useful

15. How did you find the ARTIFACT and REFLECTION requirements at each tier?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Tier requirements were filled with hoops and unnecessary busywork or not at this step.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tier requirements enhanced my learning with meaningful reflection and demonstration of learning.

16. Compared to other professional development in which you have participated, how much of your learning was transferred into your setting?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Much Less	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Much More

17. Please explain answer above.

Completed Personalized PD Experience

14. How clear did you find the RUBRICS?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Confusing and Unhelpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Clarifying and Useful

15. How did you find the ARTIFACT and REFLECTION requirements at each tier?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Tier requirements were filled with hoops and unnecessary busywork or not at this step.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tier requirements enhanced my learning with meaningful reflection and demonstration of learning.

16. What percent of the learning you gained in this professional learning experience was transferred into your setting?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 25%
- ☐ 25-50%
- ☐ 51-75%
- ☐ 76-100%

17. Please explain answer above.

18. How likely are you to complete another Personalized Professional Development Experience in the future?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not At All Likey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Likely

19. Please explain answer above.

20. What else would you like to add about the Personalized Professional Development process that you have not had the opportunity to share?

Appendix E: Personalized Professional Learning Survey, April 2018

3/27/2018

Personalized Professional Learning Survey

Personalized Professional Learning Survey

Please identify meaningful professional learning experiences by answering the following questions honestly. Your identity will be kept private. Confidentiality will be maintained by limiting access to identifiable information (only primary investigator will have access) and securely storing data documents within locked or password protected locations. Identifiers will be removed and destroyed at the time of publication of research.

1. At what level are you primarily located?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Early Childhood
- ☐ Elementary School
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ District
- ☐ Other

2. What year are you currently serving in education (combined in and out of Parkway)?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 1-3 year
- ☐ 4-11 years
- ☐ 12-20 years
- ☐ 21 years or more

3. Which position best describes your primary responsibilities?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Parkway Core Educator (elementary classroom, ela, social studies, chemistry, etc.)
- ☐ Parkway EnCore (art, music, pe, librarian, ell, counselor, etc.)
- ☐ Special School District Educator
- ☐ Teaching Assistant
- ☐ Other

Professional Learning Opportunities

3/27/2018

Personalized Professional Learning Survey

4. **Within Parkway offerings, how often are you able to FIND development to help you reach your individual professional learning needs?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Through Parkway offerings, I can rarely find opportunities to reach my learning needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Through Parkway offerings, there are more opportunities to reach my learning needs than I could ever use.

5. **How often are you able to ATTEND/PARTICIPATE in outside development to help you reach your individual professional learning needs?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Parkway rarely works with me to attend outside opportunities to reach my learning needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Parkway always works with me to attend outside opportunities to reach my learning needs.

6. **How often are you able select the topic for the professional development in which you participate?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
The topic of my professional learning is always determined for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I have a lot of say in the topic(s) of professional learning in which I participate.

Transfer of New Learning

7. **In general, please identify the percentage of new learning you typically transfer to your practice after each of the following professional learning modes:**

Check all that apply.

	Less than 25%	25-50%	51-75%	76-100%
In-Person, In-District Workshop Before or After School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching Cycles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Out of District Workshops/State or National Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online, Self-Paced Courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online, Synchronous Courses (at own computer, others online at same time)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job Embedded Cohorts with Multiple Half-Day Releases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual Learning on Self-Selected Topics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning with My CLT/PLC/MSPLC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3/27/2018

Personalized Professional Learning Survey

8. In addition to lack of time, what barrier(s) most often prevent you from implementing new learning into your practice?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Fear of Failure/Implementing Unproven Practices
- ☐ Lack of Support from Administration/District
- ☐ Lack of Support from Teammates/Colleagues
- ☐ Lack of Monetary Incentive
- ☐ Lack of Resources
- ☐ Other: _____

9. How much more likely would you be to participate in professional learning if you could select the topic and mode of the learning?


Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Much Less Likely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Much More Likely

10. If you received stipends for demonstrating transfer of new learning into your practice, how incentivized would you be to transfer new learning into your practice?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all more incentivized to transfer new learning into practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly incentivized to transfer new learning into practice.

Powered by
 Google Forms

Appendix F: Stakeholder Feedback Survey on Initial Intervention Instrument

Personalized PD Instrument-Stakeholder Feedback

First, thank you for offering feedback on the new Personalized Professional Development tool. We are continually learning, revising, updating and improving our process to be both streamlined and clear.

Please complete the below questions honestly to help us identify strengths and areas we need to revise.

Thank you so much!

1. What strengths do you see in this process?

2. What challenges do you see in this process?

3. What suggestions do you have for improvement?

4. Please note any thoughts you were not able to record above.

Appendix G: Personalized Professional Development Experience: You Name the Learning

Personalized Professional Development Experiences: You Name the Learning

	Requirement	Not Yet on Track	On Track
Step 1: Submit Idea	Includes relevant topic and goal. Main learning comes from a vetted (verified as a valid source) and reliable (valid and sound by educational standards) resource.	The main resource IS NOT of vetted, reliable educational value.	The main resource IS of vetted, reliable educational value.
Where will you get your learning?	<i>vetted and reliable</i> <i>not vetted or reliable</i>		
	<i>ASCD, EdWeekly</i> <i>Pinterest</i>		
	<i>Google Apps for Education</i> <i>Breakfast with other teachers</i>		
	<i>National Organization, Marshall Memo, etc...</i> <i>Ted Talk</i>		
Submitted Online	<i>Book chapter</i>		
Step 2: Acquire New Learning			
Step 3a: Make Meaning	Submit 300-500 words or 2-3 min. video summarizing learning and making meaning of topic.	New learning summary is somewhat muddled or lacks specificity. Understanding of the topic is surface level.	New learning summary is articulated and specific Educator has a clear understanding of the topic.
What did you learn?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I learned...For me this means....		
Step 3b: Transfer Learning	Provides a short, contextual video (2-3 minutes) or written description (300-500 words) of the activity in which the new learning was demonstrated. May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Links to assignment, student work, teacher developed resourceAnnotated videos of instructionAnnotated photos from lessonsDetailed lesson plans clearly outlining incorporation of new learningOther evidence that clearly shows transfer of new learning	Description is not clear and/or lacks sufficient contextual detail to know what the teacher did to implement the new learning.	Artifact clearly shows transfer of new learning into setting with understanding and strongly supports intended goal. Description is clear with sufficient contextual detail to know what the teacher did to implement the new learning.
How did you transfer the learning into your practice?			
	Requirement	Not Yet on Track	On Track
Step 3c: Reflection	Written paper or video recording specifically reflecting on transfer of new learning.	Reflection is not focused or lacks depth or specificity. What was the impact of implementing the wait time protocol with your students? Were there any relevant challenges or observations with this protocol? Self-analysis of practice is surface level.	Reflection is articulated and specific. Self-analysis of practice demonstrates continued learning. Reflections clearly indicate how the activity affected both the students and the teacher, and the reflection includes challenges and observations.
What did you take away?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How has this learning impacted your practice?Moving forward, how might your practice change as a result of what you have learned?		

Appendix H: Personalized Learning Request for Approval

Personalized Learning Request for Approval**1. Which most closely applies to you?***Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ As a group of educators, we are submitting a proposal for a personalized learning experience that we plan to complete together. *Skip to question 2.*
- ☐ I am working with a group that previously applied and need to identify the credit/stipend selection I would like to earn. *Skip to question 17.*
- ☐ I am individually proposing a personalized learning experience. *Skip to question 9.*

Group members**2. Please list name(s) and building location(s) of all members applying for this proposal below:**

Area of Study-Group**3. What would you like to study?**

4. What is your goal/outcome?

We want to learn ____ in order to _____. Please specifically identify the connection to curriculum or professional best practice(s).

What professional resource(s) will you use?

A minimum of two resources must be utilized.

- Main learning must come from a research based, professional resource.
- Paste link to website, article, book, research, blog, video, etc. you will use to drive learning.
- One resource may be a conference, PD session, visiting an industry site/museum, etc.

Accepted Professional resources examples: EdLeadership, Edutopia, ASCD, Google Apps for Education, Professional websites, EdWeekly, educational text/book.

Not accepted Non-professional resources: Pinterest, colleagues, Instagram, Teachers Pay Teachers, etc.

5. Resource #1:

6. Resource #2:

7. Describe your learning plan.

A paragraph or list is sufficient.

8. On what Domain of Professional Practice are you focusing?

Stop filling out this form.

Area of Study-Individual**9. First Name:**

10. Last Name:

11. What would you like to study?

12. What is your goal/outcome?

I want to learn ____ in order to _____. Please specifically identify the connection to curriculum or professional best practice(s).

Area of Study-Individual

9. First Name:

10. Last Name:

11. What would you like to study?

12. What is your goal/outcome?

I want to learn ____ in order to _____. Please specifically identify the connection to curriculum or professional best practice(s).

What professional resource(s) will you use?

A minimum of two resources must be utilized.

-Main learning must come from a research based, professional resource.

-Paste link to website, article, book, research, blog, video, etc. you will use to drive learning.

-One resource may be a conference, PD session, visiting an industry site/museum, etc.

Accepted Professional resources examples: EdLeadership, Edutopia, ASCD, Google Apps for Education, Professional websites, EdWeekly, educational text/book.

Not accepted Non-professional resources: Pinterest, colleagues, Instagram, Teachers Pay Teachers, etc.

13. Resource #1:

14. Resource #2:

15. Describe your learning plan

A paragraph or list is sufficient.

16. On what Domain of Professional Practice are you focusing?

Group Application Individual Information

17. First Name:

18. Last Name:

19. Name of person that submitted group proposal:

Appendix I: Tiered Personalized PD Handbook

Tiered Personalized PD Handbook

Professional learning at your own PACE, in the PLACE of your choosing, focused on the DEVELOPMENT you need RIGHT NOW.

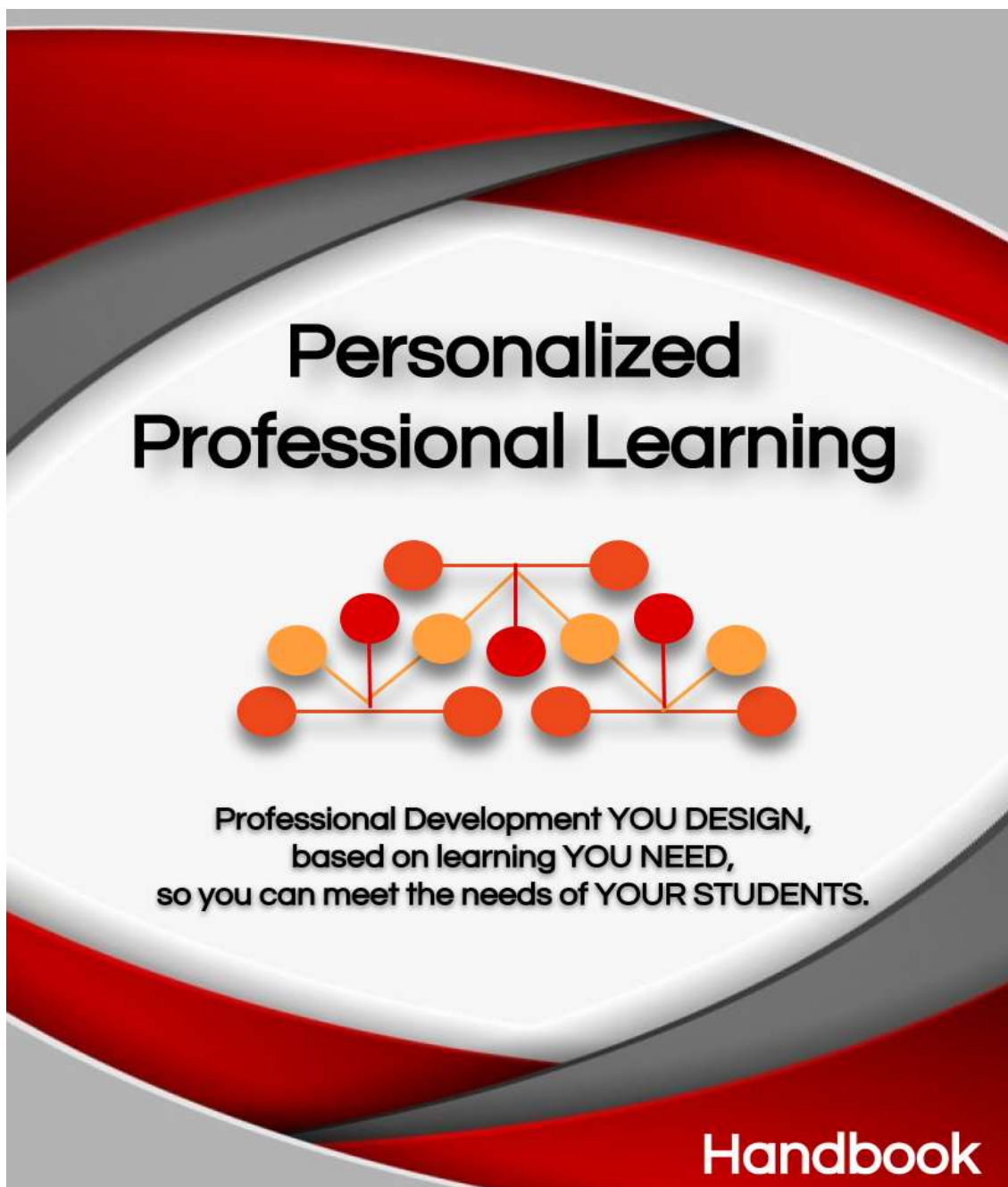
Complete a tier, earn credit/stipend! Earn more as you build across tier

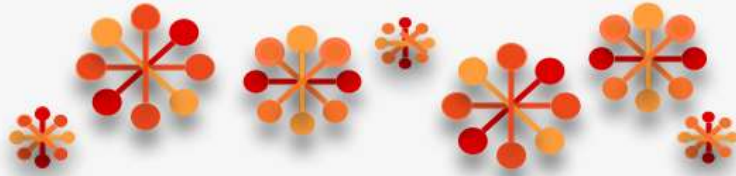
	Tier 1 Evidence of LEARNING	Tier 2 Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION	Tier 3 Evidence of IMPACT (measurement)	Tier 4 Evidence of SHARING with Others
Credit/ Stipend:	.25 district credit or \$75 stipend not to exceed 1.0 credit/\$300 in 3 years	.5 district credit or \$150 stipend not to exceed 1.5 credit in 3 years	.75 district credit 5 stipend not to exceed 3 credits or \$225 in 2 years	1.0 credit, 1.0 salary credit or \$300 stipend not to exceed 2 credits or \$600 in 1 year
Overview of Expectation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit a 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 min. video summarizing and making meaning of new learning from at least two sources or approved online course. One resource may be a conference, PD session, visiting an industry site/museum, etc. 	In addition to Tier 1 requirement... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit artifact demonstrating implementation of new learning in the educator's setting. Submit a 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 min video identifying desired outcome, explaining artifact, and connecting to curriculum or professional best practice. 	In addition to Tier 1, and Tier 2 requirements... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit data. Submit a 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 min video explaining the data submitted, identifying the learning goal(s) measured, and reflecting on results (positive or negative) toward learning goal. 	In addition to TIER 1 Tier 2, and Tier 3 requirements... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share lesson plan/overview. Submit a 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 min video summarizing and sharing the new practice to peers in a way that others can apply to their setting and identify lessons learned and next steps.

Ready to get started?

Step 1: Submit Idea	Proposal Submission Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit proposal for approval individually or as a team. Identify learning focus and professional resource(s). Do not proceed with learning until you hear back from the Talent Development Coordinator.
Step 2: Engage in Learning Experiences and Complete Desired Tier Requirements	Keep your work organized on the Personalized Learning Response Template (will have you make a copy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Click HERE to see requirements overview, rubrics, and credit/stipend options. Tiers must be completed in order. The higher the tier, the more demonstration of transfer = the more credit/stipend earned.
Step 3: Submit Tiers for Review	When complete, upload and submit your work to the Personalized Learning Final Submission form	Submission(s) will be reviewed by PLAT members and/or Coordinator(s). If scores do not agree, a principal or coordinator with knowledge in the area will make final determination of credit.
Step 4: Earn Credit or Stipend	When your submission is approved, it will be entered into PEERS and you will receive your credit or stipend!	

Appendix J Personalized Professional Learning Handbook





**Complete a tier, earn credit/stipend!
Earn more as you build across tiers.**



Tier 1: Evidence of LEARNING

.25 credit or \$75



Tier 2: Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION

.5 credit or \$150



Tier 3: Evidence of IMPACT

.75 credit or \$225

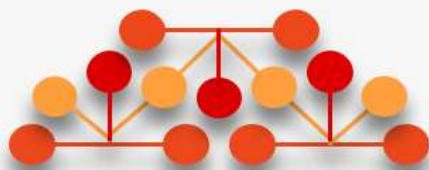


Tier 4: Evidence of SHARING

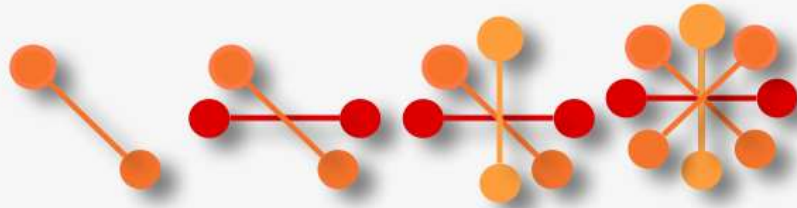
1.0 credit, \$300 or one salary credit

Overview of Expectations

	Tier 1 Evidence of LEARNING	Tier 2 Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION
Credit/ Stipend:	.25 district credit or \$75 stipend	.5 district credit or \$150 stipend
Overview of Expectation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete your new learning using at least two approved sources or online course. • Submit 500-600 words or 2-3 minute video summarizing and making meaning of new learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>One resource may be a conference, PD session, visiting an industry site/museum, etc.</i> 	<p>In addition to Tier 1 requirement...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit artifact demonstrating implementation of new learning. • Submit a 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 min. video identifying desired outcome, explaining artifact, & connecting to curriculum or professional best practice.
Rubrics	Submission template with Tier Rubrics	
Maximum Submissions	not to exceed four Tier 1 as final submissions (1 credit, \$300) every 3 years	not to exceed three Tier 2 as final submissions (1.5 credits or \$450) every 3 years



Tier 3 Evidence of IMPACT (measurement)	Tier 4 Evidence of SHARING with Others	
.75 district credit or \$225 stipend	1.0 credit, 1.0 salary credit or \$300 stipend	Credit/ Stipend:
In addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2 requirements... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit data artifact. • Submit a 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 min. video explaining the data submitted, identifying the learning goal(s) measured, and reflecting on results (positive or negative) toward learning goal. 	In addition to Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 requirements... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share plan/overview, explaining the practice to colleagues in a way that others can apply to their setting • Submit a 250-350 word reflection or 1-2 min. video summarizing and identify lessons learned and next steps. 	Overview of Expectation:
(will have you make a copy)		Rubrics
not to exceed three Tier 3 as final submissions (2.25 credits or \$675) a year	not to exceed three Tier 4 as final submissions (3 credits or \$900) a year	Maximum Submissions



Process-Getting Started

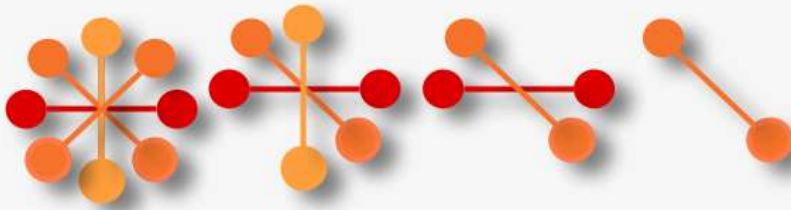
Step 1: Submit Idea

[Proposal Submission Form](#)

- Submit proposal identifying learning focus and professional resource(s).
- *Do not proceed with learning until you hear back from the Talent Development Coordinator.*

Step 2: Engage in Learning and Complete Tier Requirements

- Organize your work on the [Personalized PD Response Template](#) (will have you make a copy).



Step 3: Submit Tiers for Review

- When complete, upload and submit your work to the [Personalized PD Final Submission form](#).
 - Submission(s) will be reviewed by Talent Development Coordinator, PLAT members and/or additional Coordinator(s).

Step 4: Credit or Stipend Awarded!

- When your submission is approved, it will be entered into PEERS and you will receive your credit or stipend.

Detailed Scoring Guides by Tier

Tier 1-LEARNING Level

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
<p>Identify at least two sources of new learning from research based, professional resources or approved online course.</p> <p>Accepted Professional resources examples: Edutopia, ASCD, Google Apps for Education, EdWeekly, conference, PD session, visiting an industry site, visiting a museum, Bloomboard, Stanford online professional learning.</p> <p>Not accepted Non-professional resources examples: Pinterest, colleagues, Instagram, Teachers Pay Teachers</p>	<p>Either of the two research based sources are not clearly or accurately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cited and/or linked. • of required professional level. 	<p>Two research based sources are clearly and accurately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cited and/or linked. • of required professional level.
<p>Submit 500-600 words or 2-3 minute video:</p> <p>1. Summarizing new learning on topic. <i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learned... • The central claim is... • This resources offers... <p>2. Demonstrate understanding by making meaning of topic. <i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For me this means... • I connected with.. • I know understand... 	<p>Minimum requirement in length is not met.</p> <p>(1) New learning summary is somewhat muddled or lacks specificity.</p> <p>(2) Demonstration of understanding and meaning making of the topic is surface level.</p>	<p>Minimum requirement in length is met.</p> <p>(1) New learning summary is articulate and specific.</p> <p>(2) Demonstration of understanding and meaning making of the topic is thorough and meaningful.</p>

Detailed Scoring Guides by Tier

Tier 2-IMPLEMENTATION Level

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
Successful completion of Tier 1.	Tier 1 is not yet successfully completed. (Please return to Tier 1, complete and resubmit.)	Successful completion of Tier 1 requirements.
Submit an artifact demonstrating the implementation of the learning with intention.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example: work samples, anchor charts, pictures, whole/small group video 1-2 minutes of lesson/project, agenda, etc. 	Artifact demonstrating the implementation of the learning does not clearly show implementation of new learning into setting with intention.	Artifact demonstrating the implementation of the learning clearly shows implementation of new learning into setting with intention.
Submit a minimum of 250-350 words or 1-2 minute video:	Minimum requirement in length is not met.	Minimum requirement in length is met.
1. Identifying desired outcome for implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The students... Our CLT... The goal was for... In this example, you see... 	(1) Desired outcome for implementation is not clearly identified.	(1) Desired outcome for implementation is clearly identified.
2. Explaining the artifact submitted.	(2) Explanation of the artifact is not clear or does not explain the artifact.	(2) Explanation of the artifact is clear and thoroughly explains the artifact.
3. Identifying connection to curriculum or professional best practice.	(3) Desired outcome is not connected to intended curriculum or best practice.	(3) Desired outcome is connected to intended curriculum or best practice.

Detailed Scoring Guides by Tier

Tier 3-IMPACT (data) Level

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
Successful completion of Tier 1 and Tier 2 requirements.	Tier 1 & 2 are not yet successfully completed. (Please return to tiers, complete and resubmit.)	Successful completion of Tier 1 and Tier 2 requirements.
Submit data demonstrating progress toward goal (positive or negative). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be any type of data: formative, summative, survey, perceptual, checklist, etc. 	Data is not submitted.	Data is submitted.
Submit 250-350 word document or 1-2 minute video reflection:	Minimum requirement in length is not met.	Minimum requirement in length is met.
1. Explaining the data submitted.	(1) Explanation of the data is somewhat muddled or unclear.	(1) Explanation of data is articulate and specific.
2. Identifying the learning goal(s) measured.	(2) Learning goal(s) measured is/are not identified.	(2) Learning goal(s) measured is/are not identified.
3. Reflecting on results (positive or negative) toward learning goal.	(3) Does not reflect on results.	(3) Reflection clearly considers the data results.

Detailed Scoring Guides by Tier

Tier 4-SHARING Level

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
Successful completion of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 requirements.	Tier 1, 2, 3 are not yet successfully completed. (Please return to tiers, complete and resubmit.)	Successful completion of Tier 1, 2 and 3 requirements.
Submit detailed lesson plan or overview of practice.	Detailed lesson plan/overview does not include enough explanation of lesson/project/learning for others to implement.	Detailed lesson plan/overview includes enough explanation of lesson/project/learning for others to implement.
Submit 250-350 word document or 1-2 minute video reflection (can be embedded with above):	Minimum requirement in length is not met.	Minimum requirement in length is met.
1. Explaining lessons learned.	(1) Lessons learned were missing or superficial.	(1) Lessons learned were meaningful and specific.
2. Suggesting revisions if lesson/project/action were to be implemented again.	(2) Suggested revisions if were to be implemented again were missing or superficial.	(2) Suggested revisions if were to be implemented again were meaningful and specific.
Links to any resources required for others to implement.	Does not include links to any resources required for others to implement.	Includes links to any resources required for others to implement.

Detailed Scoring Guides by Tier

Tier 4-SHARING Level

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
Successful completion of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 requirements.	Tier 1, 2, 3 are not yet successfully completed. (Please return to tiers, complete and resubmit.)	Successful completion of Tier 1, 2 and 3 requirements.
Submit detailed lesson plan or overview of practice.	Detailed lesson plan/overview does not include enough explanation of lesson/project/learning for others to implement.	Detailed lesson plan/overview includes enough explanation of lesson/project/learning for others to implement.
Submit 250-350 word document or 1-2 minute video reflection (can be embedded with above):	Minimum requirement in length is not met.	Minimum requirement in length is met.
1. Explaining lessons learned.	(1) Lessons learned were missing or superficial.	(1) Lessons learned were meaningful and specific.
2. Suggesting revisions if lesson/project/action were to be implemented again.	(2) Suggested revisions if were to be implemented again were missing or superficial.	(2) Suggested revisions if were to be implemented again were meaningful and specific.
Links to any resources required for others to implement.	Does not include links to any resources required for others to implement.	Includes links to any resources required for others to implement.

Appendix K: Response Template for Personalized PD Tiers



By typing my name below, I certify all information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge:

- The learning, activity, or event for this experience took place outside of working hours.
- Parkway did not compensate me to attend or complete this learning, activity, or event.
- Parkway does not pay me a yearly stipend for my participation in this learning, activity, or event.
- For Tier 1 Final Submissions only: Registration fees or other costs of attending this learning, activity, or event were not paid by Parkway.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Building : _____

Title of Project: _____

At which tier is your final submission? _____

How are you requesting compensation?

Stipend, Credit (toward 3 in 3, Salary Credit

[Please see details on pages 4-5 of Handbook](#)

For Tier 4 Only:

By typing my name to the right, I acknowledge that this product will be shared with other educators as part of my Tier 4 SHARING expectation.

For Tiers 1-3:

By typing my name to the right, I give my permission for this product to be shared with other educators. (Leave blank if you do not wish to have it shared.)

Please Note:

1. Use this template to collect and organize reflections and artifacts *after* submitting and receiving a [Personalized Learning Request](#) approval.
2. Complete requirements for all desired Tiers before attaching template to the [Personalized Learning Final Submission form](#) and submitting for review.
3. To receive credit/stipend a score of On Track must be earned for all descriptors.
4. Work must be revised and resubmitted until a score of On Track is earned for subsequent Tiers to be considered.

Tier 1-LEARNING Scoring Guide

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
Identify at least two sources of new learning from research based, professional resources or approved online course. Accepted Professional resources example: Professional texts, Professional articles, Professional blogs, Educational conference, PD sessions, Visiting an industry site, Visiting a museum related to instruction, Bloomboard, Stanford Online Professional Learning. Not accepted Non-professional resources: Pinterest, Colleagues, Instagram, Teachers Pay Teachers	Either of the two research based sources are not clearly or accurately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cited and/or linked. are not of required professional level. 	Two research based sources are clearly and accurately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cited and/or linked. are of required professional level.
Submit 500-600 words or 2-3 minute video: 1. Summarizing new learning on topic. <i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I learned... The central claim is... This resources offers... 2. Demonstrate understanding by making meaning of topic. <i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For me this means... In the future, I hope... 	Minimum requirement in length is not met.	Minimum requirement in length is met.
	(1) New learning summary is somewhat muddled or lacks specificity.	(1) New learning summary is articulate and specific.
	(2) Demonstration of understanding of the topic is surface level.	(2) Demonstration of understanding and meaning making of the topic is deep and clear.
Score:	Additional Comments:	
PLAT member/Coordinator, please indicate score by highlighting appropriate column. Add any additional comments to the right.		

Tier 1-LEARNING Response Space

Titles, Descriptions, or Links to Resources or online course:	Resource 1:	
	Resource 2:	
Written Reflection or Link to Video: 1. Summarizing topic and learning. 2. Making meaning of topic.		

Tier 2-IMPLEMENTATION Scoring Guide

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
Successful completion of Tier 1.	Tier 1 is not yet successfully completed. (Please return to Tier 1, complete and resubmit.)	Successful completion of Tier 1 requirements.
Submit an artifact demonstrating the implementation of the learning with intention.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example: work samples, anchor charts, pictures, whole/small group video 1-2 minutes of lesson/project, agenda, etc. 	Artifact demonstrating the implementation of the learning does not clearly show implementation of new learning into setting with intention.	Artifact demonstrating the implementation of the learning clearly shows implementation of new learning into setting with intention.
Submit a minimum of 250-350 words or 1-2 minute video: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying desired outcome for implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The students... Our CLT... The goal was for... Explaining the artifact submitted. Identifying connection to curriculum or professional best practice. 	Minimum requirement in length is not met.	Minimum requirement in length is met.
	(1) Desired outcome for implementation is not clearly identified.	(1) Desired outcome for implementation is clearly identified.
	(2) Explanation of the artifact is not clear or does not explain the artifact.	(2) Explanation of the artifact is clear and clearly explains the artifact
	(3) Desired outcome is not connected to intended curriculum or best practice.	(3) Desired outcome is connected to intended curriculum or best practice.
Score:	Additional Comments:	
PLAT member/Coordinator, please indicate score by highlighting appropriate column. Add any additional comments to the right.		

Tier 2-IMPLEMENTATION Response Space

<p>Link or paste pictures of artifact(s) demonstrating the implementation of the learning.</p>	
<p>Written Reflection or Link to Video:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying desired outcome for implementation. Explaining the artifact submitted. Identifying connection to curriculum or professional best practice. 	

Tier 3-MEASURING Scoring Guide

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
Successful completion of Tier 1 and Tier 2 requirements.	If Tier 1 and Tier 2 are not yet successfully completed, please return to Tier 1 and 2, complete and resubmit.	Successful completion of Tier 1 and Tier 2 requirements.
Submit data demonstrating progress toward goal (positive or negative). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be any type of data: formative, summative, survey, perceptual, checklist, etc. 	Data is not submitted.	Data is submitted.
Submit 250-350 word document or 1-2 minute video reflection:	Minimum requirement in length is not met.	Minimum requirement in length is met.
1. Explaining the data submitted.	(1) Explanation of the data is somewhat muddled or unclear.	(1) Explanation of data is articulate and specific.
2. Identifying the learning goal(s) measured.	(2) Learning goal(s) measured is/are not identified.	(2) Learning goal(s) measured is/are not identified.
3. Reflecting on results (positive or negative) toward learning goal.	(3) Does not reflect on results.	(3) Reflection clearly considers the data results.
Score:	Additional Comments:	
PLAT member/Coordinator, please indicate score by highlighting appropriate column. Add any additional comments to the right.		

Tier 3-MEASURING Response Space

<p>Link or paste picture to/of data:</p>	
<p>Written Reflection or Link to Video Reflection:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the data submitted above. Identifying the learning goal(s) measured. Reflecting on results (positive or negative) toward learning goal. 	

Tier 4-SHARING Scoring Guide

Requirement	Not Yet On Track	On Track
Successful completion of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 requirements.	Tier 1, 2, 3 are not yet successfully completed. (Please return to tiers, complete and resubmit.)	Successful completion of Tier 1, 2 and 3 requirements.
Submit detailed lesson plan or overview of practice.	Detailed lesson plan/overview does not include enough explanation of lesson/project/learning for others to implement.	Detailed lesson plan/overview includes enough explanation of lesson/project/learning for others to implement.
Submit 250-350 word document or 1-2 minute video reflection (can be embedded with above): 1. Explaining lessons learned. 2. Suggesting revisions if lesson/project/ action were to be implemented again.	Minimum requirement in length is not met.	Minimum requirement in length is met.
	(1) Lessons learned were missing or superficial.	(1) Lessons learned were meaningful and specific.
	(2) Suggested revisions if were to be implemented again were missing or superficial.	(2) Suggested revisions if were to be implemented again were meaningful and specific.
Links to any resources required for others to implement.	Does not include links to any resources required for others to implement.	Includes links to any resources required for others to implement.
Score:	Additional Comments:	
<i>PLAT member/Coordinator, please indicate score by highlighting appropriate column. Add any additional comments to the right.</i>		

Tier 4-SHARING Response Space

Link to Detailed Lesson Plan or Overview:	
Link to any resources required for others:	
Written Reflection or Link to Video Reflection includes: 1. lessons learned. 2. suggested revisions.	

Impact of Structured Social-Emotional Support for Teachers Through Professional
Development and Other Choice Opportunities

Richard A. Regina

June, 2019

Chapter 1: Background and Rationale

Educators, both teachers and administrators, agree that teacher stress is detrimental to education (Jennings et al., 2017, p. 2). In fact, both students and teachers are stressed, and recently student stress has been a focus point as schools have begun to address social-emotional competence with students. Teacher stress, similar to student stress, has a negative impact on teacher health, student achievement, and the overall school climate. This study will examine the effect that social emotional supports, when included in teacher professional development, will affect their attitudes, dispositions, and quality of their daily interactions with adult colleagues and student learning environments. In both the research and conclusion, the following premise is assumed: Incorporating social emotional support for teachers through professional development can decrease teacher stress through a systematic approach and teacher choice.

Teachers are stressed, and this stress has an impact on teacher health, student achievement, and education in general (Jennings et al., 2017, p. 2). When one feels stress or anxiety, performance is impacted, and it would seem if social-emotional support can be addressed, performance should increase. People who feel good perform better. In terms of teaching, performance can be determined by such direct indicators as attendance, increased collaboration, attrition, positive academic outcomes etc., and indirect indicators such as happiness and perceived support (Greenberg, Brown, & Abenavoli, 2016, p. 4). Reducing teacher stress may have a positive impact on both teacher performance and student achievement.

First, it is important to understand the rationale driving social-emotional support for teachers. Whether it is the nature of the job or the nature of the teacher, research by

Madeline Will found that teachers find work to be stressful at a much higher rate than workers in the general population. Teachers feel stressed 61% of the time while the general population feels stressed 30% of the time (Will, 2017, p. 1). Clearly, teacher stress is a reality that must be considered and addressed in a school. While many districts offer an Employee Assistance Program, this is often a reactive intervention to an incident or event in a teacher's life that helps teachers cope with a stressful event. Social-emotional support for teachers through professional development can be a proactive action to both decrease and prevent teacher stress.

The effects of teacher stress have collateral damage. For example, teacher absence rates are higher than that of both private sector employees as well as other public-sector employees. Kronholz (2013) noted even though teachers generally work 180 or 190 day school years compared to 260 days for private sector employees, their absenteeism rate is still considerably higher (para. 10 and 11). This could be because of generous absentee policies or it could be because stress or a combination of the two. In addition, research by National Council on Teacher Quality focused on data from schools of the 40 largest metropolitan areas in 2012 and 2013. Among its findings, the NCTQ (2014) discovered on average, public school teachers miss nearly 11 days out of a school year (pg. 2). Whether the district has a 180, 186, or 190 day school year, according to the data, teachers miss more than 5% of the school year. In my experience as an administrator, the teacher has a tremendous impact on student learning, thus developing strategies to decrease discretionary absences should have a positive impact on student achievement. Stress may cause mental and emotional fatigue that increases absenteeism, and stress can lead to physical illness that also increases absenteeism. Certainly, there are

other factors that contribute to absences as well, but many teacher absences are preventable, and social-emotional support for teachers can help increase teacher attendance.

Raegen Miller (2008, p. 7) elaborated on his research when he concluded that more discretionary absences are taken on Mondays and Fridays than other days of the week. In my experience as an administrator, the concentration of discretionary absences on a particular day has a negative impact on a school. Not only do students have a higher percentage of substitute teachers that lack the content expertise, but when a building runs out of substitutes, other teachers are forced to cover classes, and in my experience, this increases frustration and stress in a building. It is important to point out, according to Miller (2008, p. 9), that discretionary absences do not include things like jury duty or a death in the family. They also do not include occurrences such as workshops or other professional development as those dates are chosen by the district and not the employee. According to Miller, “Discretionary absences include personal days and absences due to one to two days of personal illness... The data show that the largest number of preventable absences-those involving deliberation and volition- is concentrated in this area” (2008, p. 9). Though chronically absent teachers are away from the classroom 18 or more days, many of these absences are of the one and two-day variety. In fact, according to Miller, “discretionary absences account for 56% of all absences” (2008, p. 9). More often than not, according to the research, teachers make a decision to be absent, and they do this on Fridays more than any other day of the week, many at a very high rate quite possibly or most likely to extend the weekend or to use as “mental health day.” In other words, when a teacher makes a decision to take a day off for a discretionary reason,

whether that is a travel day or just a day off to take a mental break, they are likely to take off on a Friday, and this decision is detrimental to students. On the surface, a Friday absence is no different than any other day, but from an organizational perspective, a concentration of Friday absences creates additional stress on a building. Students may have multiple substitutes on a Friday, and not only are students missing out on instruction from content experts, but it could create a perception amongst students that Fridays are not that important which could impact student attendance. Additionally, a shortage of substitutes on a Friday causes other teachers to cover the classes and not have a plan period. This creates frustration and stress with the staff. In my experience as an administrator, this frustration and stress negatively impacts a school climate, and this impacts students.

Obviously, educators cannot control their health completely. Thus, absences because of the flu, an infection, or even an injury are inevitable. In addition, follow up care for a sick day may require an additional absence from the classroom. Unfortunately, though, as medicine makes advances, that should, in theory, decrease absences, but teacher absences are increasing. Many school districts offer flu-shot clinics, mammogram vans, and preventive medicine to improve physical health, so offering social emotional support to improve mental and emotional health might prove to be an effective measure to improve teacher attendance. Flu shots, mammograms, and other preventative measures directly address potential physical illness while social-emotional support for teachers potentially could decrease the stress that compromises the immune system that also has a positive correlation with keeping teachers healthy and in the

classroom for their students. Additionally, social emotional support for teachers could prove to be an effective measure in helping teachers manage stress that the job brings.

Teacher stress does not just have a negative impact on daily teacher attendance, it also has an impact on teacher retention. Research by Greenberg, Brown, and Abenavoli, (2016, p. 5) found a direct correlation between teacher stress and physical health. For example, almost half of all teachers in the study reported working with high daily stress and nearly half of teachers surveyed reported poor sleep quality. In addition, more than 40 percent of teachers leave the profession, and the high amount of teacher stress is a factor in this exodus (Greenberg, Brown, and Abenavoli, 2016, p. 5). Some sort of structured organizational social-emotional support can help teachers cope with stress and channel more positive energy which will have mental, social, emotional, and physical benefits. These health benefits may increase teacher attendance and decrease the turnover rate.

Components of the Descriptive Analysis

This dissertation in practice is a descriptive, quantitative analysis studying social emotional support for teachers through professional development and other choice options. “Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data” (Web Center for Social Research Methods, 2019, para. 1). During the research, minimal adjustments were made throughout the year that were data driven. The research gained could be used to help the school and district better plan professional development in subsequent years. The research does not offer ways to incentivize or influence

teachers to attend particular professional development, beyond the experimental variable of choice. Rather it examines the patterns and feelings of teachers regarding social emotional support.

Problem Statement

The question this research is looking to answer is two-fold. One question to answer through this research is that because research indicates teachers are under stress and need social emotional support, if it is offered, 1) If given the option, will teachers choose to participate in social-emotional support versus traditional professional development? 2) what is the best way to get teachers to take advantage of social-emotional support offerings, mandated professional development or choice? Additionally, a sub-question will explore the participation in social-emotional support choices to determine what types of social emotional support teachers are looking for to examine trends as the school year progresses and the support becomes more popular, predictable, and part of the regular programming? Also, will teachers find structured social emotional relevant to their practice and as essential as content based professional development? On a related note, what will it take to make social-emotional support part of a school culture, more specifically, a culture in a building that makes staff members feel better when they walk through the door every morning because social emotional support is accessible and teachers look forward to coming to school. The research that was completed during the 2018-19 school year proved to be a good foundation for the development of that culture.

Description of Study Site

During the 2018-19 school year, the school being studied was going through a lot of change as the schedule daily schedule changed for the first time in a decade. Many

teachers will be teaching a block schedule, and most of them have never done that before. Also, the school district created four (4) half day professional development sessions to train teachers on the new schedule. Social emotional support through the building level professional development could contribute to stress reduction as some of the literature points out that change creates stress. Finally, the dissertation in practice took place in such a big building, the professional development created more opportunity to build relationships and help build more community in the school amongst teachers, and this community positivity could have a positive impact on school culture.

Research Questions

The predominant question of this research asked: How can social-emotional support for teachers become part of the school culture?

To answer the primary question, the following secondary questions were analyzed:

1. If given the option, will teachers choose to participate in social-emotional support versus more traditional professional development?
2. What type of social emotional support are various teachers looking for?
3. Will teachers participate in social emotional supports offered through choice?
4. Do teachers find social emotional support relevant to their practice?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in this research:

-Professional Development- “The term professional development may be used in reference to a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators

improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness” (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).

Social-Emotional Learning- Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set, and achieve positive goals, feel, and show empathy for others, establish, and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2019).

Stress- “Stress is a fact of nature in which forces from the inside or outside world affect the individual, either one's emotional or physical well-being, or both. The individual responds to stress in ways that affect the individual, as well as their environment” (MedicineNet, 2019).

Discretionary Absence- “Discretionary absences include personal days and absences due to one to two days of personal illness” (Miller, 2008).

Self-Care- “Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it’s a simple concept in theory, it’s something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduce anxiety. It’s also key to a good relationship with oneself and others” (Michael, 2018).

Relationship Building- “Ability to identify and initiate working relationships and to develop and maintain them in a way that is of mutual benefit to both yourself and the other party” (Excellence in Arts, 2019).

Research Significance and New Ideas

Psychologist Adam Saitz believes “The most effective intervention for every student is a healthy teacher living a balanced life” (Teacher Wellness: A Conversation with Adam Saenz, 2013, p. 1). Clearly, research from Jennings et al. (2017) indicates one way to reduce stress is through “engaging in mindful awareness practices” (p. 3). Though the impacts of social emotional support for teachers is beneficial, research on implementation is just beginning. Creating tiered, choice based professional development will add to the research on the impact of social emotional support. Offering social emotional support through choice based professional development could add validity to the desire for teachers to have quality social emotional support as well as quantifying the impacts of social emotional support. In addition, while some professional development is in a vacuum and addresses individual issues, social- emotional support is potentially transformational in a building.

One aspect of social-emotional support that is simple to implement but often taken for granted and ignored is community building. From my own experience as an administrator, so often, on the first day teachers report to school to begin a new school year, team building activities are done to help build morale for the upcoming year. From that point on, team building gets ignored as there are many more pressing issues to address. Teachers then go to their classrooms for the next 180 days and feel isolated. Similar to any effective professional development, community building must be ongoing. Community building is important aspect of the military, teams, office staffs etc., so the assumption is that team building through professional develop can have a positive impact

on student achievement as happy teachers create a more positive learning environment for students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Rationale for Increased Social Emotional Support for Teachers

Social emotional support for teachers is a challenge in education. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set, and achieve positive goals, feel, and show empathy for others, establish, and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2019, p. 1). Implementing social and emotional learning is not a single lesson or moment and cannot be measured immediately, rather it is a process.

According to Greenberg, Brown , and Abenavoli (2016, p. 5), 40 percent of teachers leave the profession, and the high amount of teacher stress is a factor in this exodus. While some districts may have higher turnover rates than others, sustained success is tough in any field with that sort of turnover rate. Providing social emotional support may curve that turnover rate because it addresses the stress that may cause the turnover rate.

Kate Stringer (2017) wrote about the stress teachers are under every day. In fact, she believes few people can relate to the pressures teachers are under. “There may be only one profession that understands the complexity, stress, and challenges a classroom teacher faces every day, and that is the medical staff inside an emergency room during a natural disaster” (Stringer, 2017, p. 1). Similar to emergency room staff, teachers must handle unique, unpredictable challenges every day, and these challenges increase stress.

While she believes teachers are under tremendous stress, Stringer (2017) does not believe districts are addressing it in a timely manner:

Social-emotional learning programs for students are becoming more popular, and rightly so, as research points to gains in academics, graduation rates, and earnings. But what's missing from these programs is support for the social-emotional needs of their teachers, who are experiencing stress and burnout. Research shows that if teacher needs aren't addressed, students feel the impact. (para. 2)

Stringer adds that social emotional support does not just positively impact student achievement, but it also positively impacts the whole student. "As teachers receive social-emotional training, they become models to their students for healthy behaviors, researchers said. After all, it's hard for students to learn skills to cope with stress or anger if the person teaching them is frazzled or unkind" (Stringer, 2017, para. 13). Stringer's findings highlight the fact that teachers too need social emotional support, but research in the area is still relatively new.

In an article titled "Designing Support for Beginning Teachers," Kendyll Stansbury and Joy Zimmerman (2000), analyzed the struggles of new teachers. "The effort of planning every lesson from scratch, teaching with unfamiliar materials, and, often teaching at an unfamiliar grade-level drains even the most energetic teachers. Compounding this is the inherent isolation of individual teachers sequestered in their individual classrooms" (Stanbury and Zimmerman, 2000, p. 4). While planning may become less draining as teachers gain experience, they attend professional development to learn how to be more efficient planners, or they just tweak successful lessons, teacher

isolation is a real issue that is often overlooked because so much professional development is focused on the “nuts and bolts” of student achievement. In addition, Stansbury and Zimmerman believe that support strategies for new teachers must be coordinated and timely. “Every support activity is more likely to happen if time is provided during regular school hours or if teachers are paid for attendance” (2000, p. 13). While it is important for new teacher support to be coordinated and not part of the day, veteran teachers could use the same coordination and planning during the school day as to not add any unnecessary burden before or after school. Additionally, structuring it during the day for teachers to attend increases the likeliness teachers will take part in the social emotional support.

In 2018, Marc Brackett and Wendy Baron published “Research Insights: Improving Teacher Well-Being for the Independent School publication. Brackett and Baron’s research focused on teachers’ emotional reality and the link between emotion and school experiences. While the study will not be completed in its entirety until later in, samples of the survey data are available. In the survey, teachers were asked to describe emotions they felt each day at school. “The top three feelings from the national sample were frustrated, overwhelmed, and stressed...” (Brackett and Baron, 2018, p. 1). The study also discussed how emotions influence teaching and learning. “Strong, negative emotions can hijack the brain in ways that make wise decision making impossible” (2018, p. 2). “Teachers who feel frustrated and angry often alienate students, and that can influence students’ sense of safety and belongingness in the classroom and their ability to learn” (2018, p. 2). The study supports the notion that teachers are stressed, and it illustrates the connection between teacher emotion and performance in the

classroom which ties directly to student achievement. In addition, these negative emotions can have an impact on teacher absenteeism and turnover rate.

Providing social -emotional support has proven benefits according to Jennings ET AL (2017). Mindfulness-based interventions give teachers a tool in their arsenal to combat and cope with work related stress. According to the research, adopting mindfulness-based interventions “may lead to a decline in stress, burnout and distress” (Jennings ET AL, 2017, p. 3). The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) model is a structured intervention similar to what professional development could be that helps teachers manage stress while also giving teachers techniques they could use independently in the classroom or even at home. In addition, the research found that teachers that completed the CARE program were more likely to have classes that have improved positive climate in the classroom. Through the research, it seemed as if both teachers and students benefited from structured social-emotional support for teachers.

In many ways, nurses are similar to teachers with the emotional baggage they carry as they, too, are working with human beings. Medlan, Howard-Ruban and Whitaker researched burnout and social support for nurses in the workplace and highlighted three key points (2004):

1. Burnout is an occupational hazard of oncology nursing, but strategies to ameliorate its occurrence have not been well researched
2. Enhancing the ability of staff nurses to support each other can result in a more supportive work environment and may improve nurse retention

3. Designing strategies to empower oncology nurses to cope with the stresses of oncology nursing should be tailored to each specific work environment. (p. 47)

Similarly, burnout is an occupational hazard in teaching, and the turnover rate is high. Creating a supportive work environment in a school can potentially decrease burnout and the turnover rate. In addition, teacher professional development should be choice based and provide them with the options to seek the development they need. In addition, education is in constant flux, and when there is change, social emotional support can decrease burnout. “Particularly in times of uncertainty and during change, social networks in the workplace play a key role in protecting employees against burnout” (Garrett & McDaniel, 2001, abstract). Providing teachers opportunities during the workday to community build with their peers can be an important support, and this support should be systematically put in place.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design

This study was designed to investigate attitudes and preferences of teachers toward professional development designed to provide social-emotional support for teachers. The analysis used surveys that are both open and closed as well as strategic interviews to evaluate a current professional development model in which social-emotional support for teachers was a choice during each building level professional development session. In addition, participation in social-emotional choice opportunities and activities was also examined.

Another purpose of the research was to compare the attitudes toward social-emotional support to the traditional professional development in which the learning is more specific, defined, and focused on a cognitive outcome that can be easily transferred and implemented. The data from surveys were gathered after each of the four professional development sessions to determine if there was a trend in the type of professional development attended had an impact on the feeling of relevance.

The study used a mixed-methods design in which simple attendance data were analyzed in conjunction with survey data to draw conclusions and discover trends. On four different dates, teachers attended building-level professional development. They had the choice to attend one of three different strands each time professional development was offered. One strand focused on student wellness. A second strand focused on technology. A third strand focused on teacher wellness with an emphasis in social emotional support.

The data were collected in two modes. In mode one, attendance and participation data were gathered in three different ways and analyzed prior to and after the professional development session. Teachers had to RSVP to one of the three professional development choices that included one option for social emotional support. Teachers also had to sign in an attendance sheet for the professional development choice they attended. Finally, in the survey following the professional development offering, teachers indicated which choice in which they participated. In mode two, qualitative data gathered from the surveys following each of the four professional development expands on the quantitative data gathered from attendance records. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data provided a deep understanding of attitudes towards professional development, specifically social emotional support for teachers.

An electronic Google survey was developed with three different types of questions would be standard for each of the four professional development sessions. The first three questions would provide basic data about the participant. Closed multiple choice questions would allow participants to identify their years of service in education, their primary responsibility, and the strand of professional development they participated. The next four questions used a five-point Likert scale to examine overall interest in the professional development choices offered, the perceived relevance of the professional development chosen, whether it met its objective, and the overall satisfaction with the session content. An open question followed that offered participants to expand on what they would implement from the professional development session. Finally, the survey concluded with a closed question asking what type of social emotional support interested

teachers as well as an inventory to identify what choice opportunities staff participated in between each session.

After each professional development opportunity and survey, data were analyzed to see if there were trends in the following areas:

1. Overall interest in professional development choices and particular strand chosen
2. Perceived relevance with particular strand
3. Overall satisfaction with particular strand
4. Social emotional topics desired compared to topics selected
5. Participation analysis in various choice opportunities.

Near the conclusion of the research, 25 participants that regularly chose social emotional support for professional development were given the opportunity to complete an electronic open interview. Open-ended questions were asked to allow participants to explain why they regularly chose social-emotional support for their professional development strand. The questions were designed to allow participants to explain their choice rationale as well as provide anecdotal data on why they chose social emotional support. This data provided some of the qualitative data that were analyzed in this research.

There were no anticipated risks for the participants. All individual survey data was anonymous and is part of the researcher's normal job duties. Participants did not receive any financial, or other compensation, for the participation in the research components of this study. Additionally, all surveys and interviews were voluntary, and there was no influence to fill out surveys as the researcher is also an evaluator and supervisor.

Context and Participants

Participation took place at a highly funded, financially stable suburban public high school in the Midwest. The school is a high performing school of more than 2300 students that has a teacher turnover rate lower than both the state and national average. The school is part of a nationally recognized school district that serves more than 23,000 students and employs over 2000 certified teachers. One hundred percent of educators at the school hold regular teaching certificates. Eighty-six percent of its staff has earned advanced degrees, and they have an average of 14.2 years of experience. Teachers in this school district earn a higher salary than the state average. US News and World Report has recognized it as one of “America’s Best High Schools.” The average ACT score for the school’s class of 2018 was 24.9, well above the state average. In addition, teachers in the school district are compensated above the state average.

Request for participation in the research was strictly voluntary as electronic surveys were sent to staff members. Return rate of the surveys varied, and in fact, participation in the surveys were around 50%, outside of one that had a 70% response rate. Similarly, the return rate of the electronic interview was around 50%. Confidentiality was maintained as only the primary researcher has access to survey data. Additionally, the data collected in the surveys had no identifiable information outside of the collected email address that will not be used in the reporting. All survey participants work at the school (see Table 1 for Survey Participation Rate). A limitation note was that Special School District employees were not required to attend professional development, but some did, and their survey data is calculated and analyzed, and this impacted attendance data as there was not a static number that should attend every session. A

second limitation note is that teachers that were absent were not required to make up professional development, thus the number of attendees could be less than the RSVP.

Table 1

Survey Participation Rate by Session for 2018-2019 School Year

Date	RSVP Total	RSVP Rate	Survey Total Respondent Total	Survey Rate	Overall PD Attendance
September 17, 2018	122	81%	78	52%	150
October 15, 2018	116	84%	59	42%	138
November 12, 2018	101	73%	97	70%	138
February 4, 2019	115	75%	71	46%	153

Throughout all the professional development sessions, RSVP rates were significantly higher than the survey response rate. In November (3%), however, there was just a three percent difference between the RSVP total and the survey response rate. During September (29%), October (42%), and February (29%), the difference between the RSVP rate and survey rate were much higher. This dissertation in practice only measured the opinions of staff members that took the survey, thus while the sample size may be reflective of the overall feelings of the entire staff, it cannot be assumed the entire staff feels the same as the staff that took the surveys.

Years of Experience

This study analyzed years of experience as an influence in social emotional support preferences. Years of experience were broken down into four subgroups: 1-3 years, 4-11 years, 12-20 years, and 21 or more years. (see Figure 1 Survey Respondents by Years of Experience in Education for 2018-19). The question in the survey asked, “*What year are you serving in education?*” This number included total years in education and not just years in the current district.

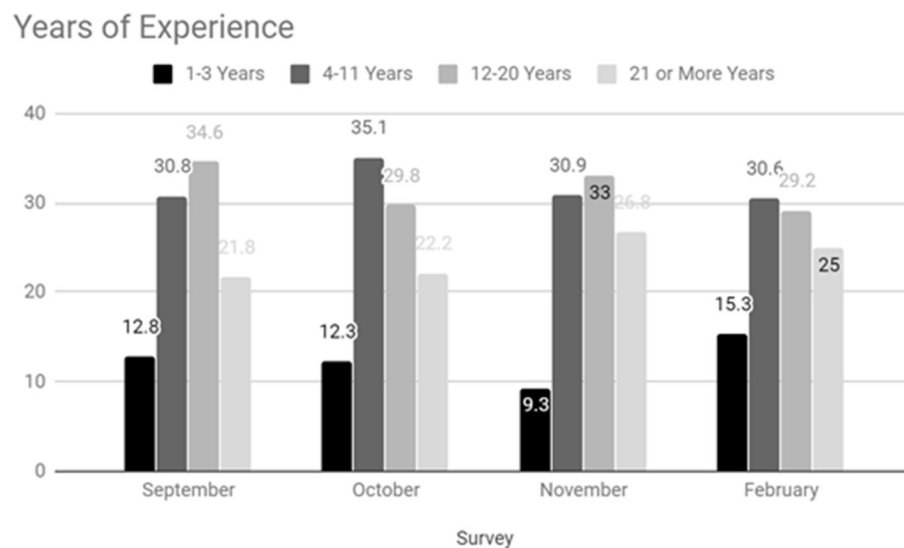


Figure 1. Survey Respondents by Years of Experience in Education for 2018-19 PD Sessions

In the initial survey after the first professional session on September 17, 2018, 78 respondents filled out the form. Overall, based on the attendance sheets, 150 staff members attended the session. In regard to the respondents, 12.8% had 1-3 years of experience, 30.8% had 4-11 years of experience, 34.6% had 12-20 years of experience and 21.8% had 21 or more years of experience.

The second survey was completed after the October 15 professional development session. In that survey 57 respondents filled out the form. Overall, based on the attendance sheets, 138 staff members attended the session. In regard to the respondents, 12.3% had 1-3 years of experience, 35.1% had 4-11 years of experience, 29.8% had 12-20 years of experience and 22.8% had 21 or more years of experience.

The third professional development session took place November 12, 2018, and 97 respondents filled out the form. Overall, based on the attendance sheets, 138 staff members attended the session. In regard to the respondents, 9.3% had 1-3 years of experience, 30.9% had 4-11 years of experience, 33% had 12-20 years of experience and 26.8% had 21 or more years of experience.

The final professional development session took place February 4, 2019, and 72 respondents filled out the form. Overall, based on the attendance sheets, 153 staff members attended the session. In regard to the respondents, 15.3% had 1-3 years of experience, 30.6% had 4-11 years of experience, 29.2% had 12-20 years of experience and 25% had 21 or more years of experience.

Regarding years of experience, the results of all four surveys were consistent as the first tier of experience (1-3 years) made up the smallest percentage, tier 4 (21 or more years) made up the second smallest percentage, while tiers 2 and 3 (4-11 and 12-20) made up the two largest percentages (see Figure 2 Years of Experience in Education Attendance Count for 2018-19 School Year). Because the years of experience remained constant throughout the survey, it was assumed one subgroup did not skew an individual survey for a particular month, nor did a particular subgroup show up at a dramatically increased or decreased rate compared to other subgroups.

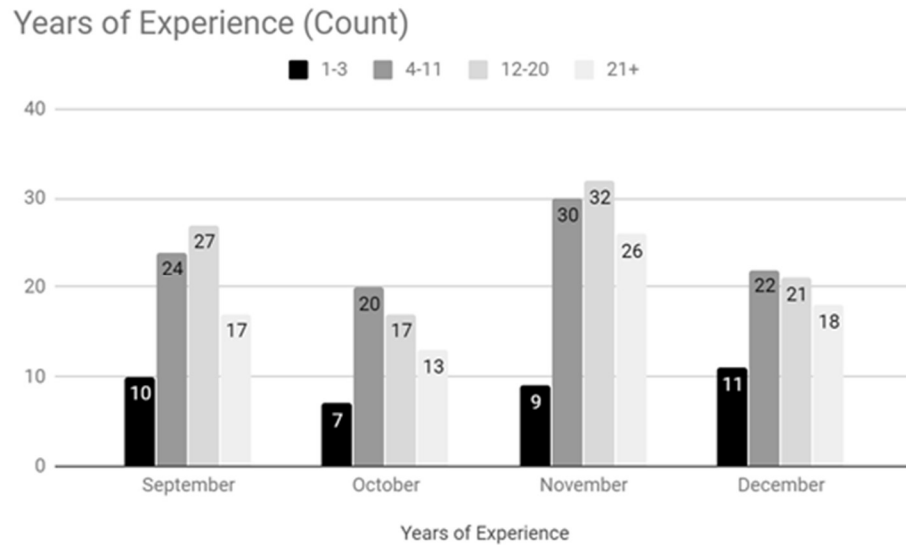


Figure 2. Years of Experience in Education Attendance Count for 2018-19 School Year

All four surveys combined indicated there was inconsistency in who filled out the surveys as the overall years of service data does not mirror the individual months. During each individual monthly survey, 21+ years of experience consistently placed third with 21.8%, 22.2%, 26.8%, and 25% (see Figure 3 Overall Years of Experience). When the surveys were combined, 4-10 years, 11-20 years, and 21+ years counted for 29.6%, 29.9%, and 29%. The first tier of experience, 1-3 years, still was the smallest subgroup at 11.4%.

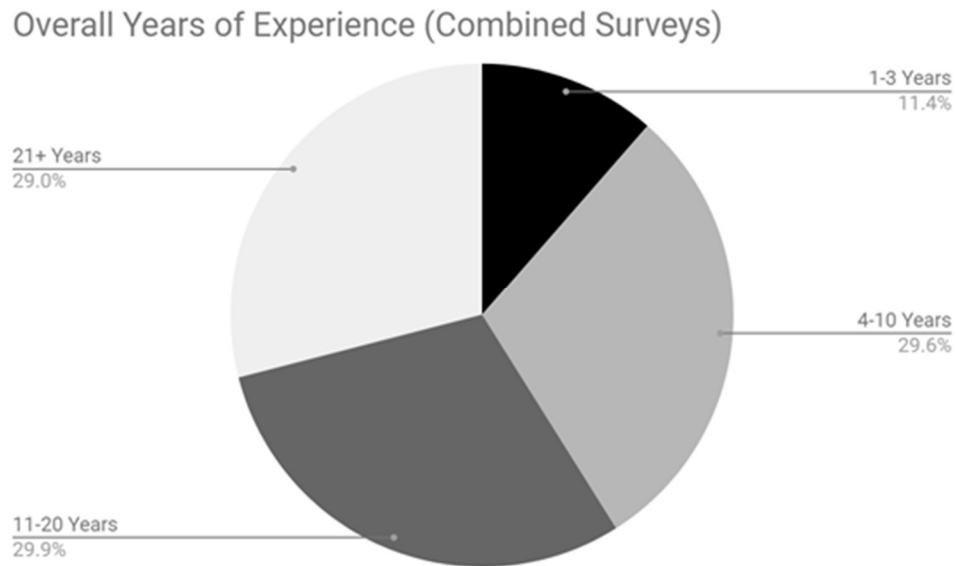


Figure 3. Overall Years of Experience

Electronic interview short answer surveys were sent to staff members that attended at least three social emotional sessions during professional development. The questionnaire was sent at the conclusion of all four professional development sessions. These electronic surveys were sent to 28 staff members. The data collected provides anecdotal evidence to the impression and impact of social emotional support. Twenty-two of twenty-eight surveys were returned with responses. The 78% return rate on these targeted surveys is higher than the return rate than the surveys sent to the entire staff after each individual session.

Role of the Subjects

Participants completed surveys following four different professional development opportunities in September, October, November, and February. The surveys took no more than five minutes to complete and will also collect attendance information from teachers on the various choice opportunities they participated. The data and information

gathered shed light on overall attitudes toward social emotional support as a strand of professional development. Additionally, select staff members were given electronic interviews that allowed them to elaborate on their feelings regarding social emotional support for teachers through professional development and other choice opportunities.

Protection of Participants

Personal identifiable information such as name and email address were removed before research was published. The school and district were not specifically identified. Consent forms were distributed prior to surveys and signed consent forms were collected for the follow up interviews. Only primary investigator has access to identifiable information.

Limitations

A limitation in the study is that not all teachers chose to fill out the surveys at the conclusion of each professional development opportunity. While all teachers must participate in professional development four times a year, not everyone filled out the survey. Twenty-eight teachers were selected for the follow-up interview, and 22 responded. In terms of overall survey data, while their answers show trends, a 50% return rate is not as reliable as a researcher would like. While higher survey participation rates would be more informational, research by Hamilton (2009) indicates online survey participation rate average is around 30% (as cited in Saldivar, 2012, p. 9). Additionally, research by the University of Texas at Austin Center for Teaching and Learning (2017) indicates email participation rate of 50% is considered good (as cited in Saldivar, 2012, p. 9). Compared to averages, this participation rate is satisfactory, but it is unclear if the surveys are an accurate and reliable sample size. That said, the data collected still provide

the opportunity to analyze attitudes and opinions on social emotional support through professional development.

Hypothesis, Questions, and Discoveries

Based on the initial research regarding social emotional support, the researcher anticipated positive feedback from the surveys as the current research indicates teachers crave social-emotional support. The researcher was curious how many teachers took advantage of social emotional support such as relationship building or mindfulness when it was an option offered against something more traditional like assessments, classroom management, Chromebook tips, or block-schedule training etc. Undoubtedly, high stakes tests and classroom behavior can cause increased stress, so there was interest if the choice to participate in something like relationship building positively impacts the school climate more so than just offering assistance with classroom management. Additionally, the researcher was also looking at ways to blend the traditional professional development with social-emotional support to create a didactic impact, so teachers get out of it what they need to get out of it and see if this positively impacts the school culture. In addition, the researcher was curious as to why teachers choose social emotional support. Is it because they are truly seeking social emotional support, is it because they are just tired of the “same old thing,” or do they choose it by default?

The researcher also looked to discover when teachers chose social emotional support, will it transfer to the classroom with positive results? While not necessarily measuring student achievement, teacher opinion on the relevance and usefulness of social emotional support was an aspect to analyze. Finally, as teachers often feel isolated, one comment the researcher has heard consistently through the years is that the building is

massive, many teachers do not have the time to get to know each other. This feeling amongst many of the staff inspired the researcher to address that issue and create a plan to manage and minimize the feeling of isolation and loneliness. Making sure community building was part of social emotional support for teachers might help them feel less isolated. This simple strategy of setting aside time to give teachers the opportunity to get to know each other could create a more positive atmosphere in the building as teachers who normally do not get the chance to interact will not get to, and this might create the simple social-emotional support a teacher needs. If there is time set aside for relationship building, will teachers choose it? Finally, the researcher wondered about the simple impact choice has with teachers regarding professional development. Choice gives teachers buy-in, and it potentially makes them feel as if they have a voice in their development.

Origins of Innovative Design

During the 2017 beginning of the school year administrator meetings for the school district, the superintendent made statement to district administrators regarding teachers and the use of their plan period. He stated, “If a teacher needs to play pick-up basketball during his or her plan period, they should play pick-up basketball.” That comment struck many in the audience as the plan period traditionally is used for grading, planning, making copies, calling parents, etc. Teachers often complete those tasks outside their contract hours already. The district leader’s logic was simple, if playing basketball, or walking the track, or reading a book quietly for 45 minutes during the school day will make a more effective teacher, then let them do that. Teachers take time away from family to grade, they miss their own child’s parent teacher conferences

because their school is hosting one the same night, and they do not have time to go to the gym in the morning because they are at school early meeting with students. His notion to pay attention to the social emotional needs of teachers sparked a plan of implementing social emotional support for teachers through professional development and other choice opportunities.

“Research shows that if teacher needs aren’t addressed, students feel the impact” (Stringer, 2017, para. 7). Interestingly, professional development has long been associated with student achievement. That is, all professional development revolves around student needs. Topics such as differentiation, assessment for learning, and even more recently, student mindfulness have been a staple of professional development. Seemingly, there is a belief that all energy exhibited by teachers should be directed toward students. Teachers are increasingly stressed, lonely, and frustrated, and traditionally professional development has not addressed those needs. Teacher stress, loneliness, and frustration directly impact students just as student stress, loneliness, and frustration impact student achievement. As previously discussed, those emotions impact such things as teacher absences, turnover rate, and the climate and culture of a building. Addressing social emotional support for teachers can have an impact on student learning similar to that of other professional development topics.

Description of Models

This study developed, implemented, and analyzed social emotional support through professional development and other choice items through the following five models:

- Choice in the four building mandated professional development sessions that incorporated the following strands: A) Student Wellness, B) Technology and C) Social Emotional Support for Teachers
- Choice opportunities throughout the semester that included: A) Lunch and Learn on various Fridays that afford a learning opportunity with the ability to interact with other staff members over lunch B) Learning Walks in which staff can invite other staff members to observe them, or they can go observe various open classrooms C) Fun Fridays
- All professional development choices were optional
- Address relationship building, self-care, and stress management
- Consider teacher preferences in both professional development and choice opportunities

At the end of the 2017-18 school year, the school's professional development committee surveyed the staff regarding their professional development needs for the 2018-19 school year. Forty-four percent of the respondents surveyed had a strong interest in teacher wellness as a professional development topic. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents had a moderate to strong interest in teacher wellness as a professional development option. With that data, it was determined that teacher wellness was a topic that interested staff members, and the committee created a strand of professional development that focused on social-emotional support for teachers.


The initial steps of the 2018-19 professional development plan began at the end of the 2017-18 school year when the committee met. After determining teacher wellness was a strand teachers were interested, the committee developed three strands of

professional development for teachers to choose on four specific dates during the year.

Those strands were technology, student wellness, and teacher wellness. The committee then divided into subcommittees, and one of those committees focused on teacher wellness. The teacher wellness subcommittee decided to sample four different types of social emotional support for the year as a foundation to build future plans for future years. Individual sessions would focus on relationship building, stress management, self-care, and peer support. Each session would be strategically placed at times of the school year that made the most sense to the committee:

- A. September- Relationship Building
- B. October- Self-Care
- C. November- Peer Support
- D. February- Stress Management

After each of the sessions, a survey was given, and the data gathered was used to adjust for future professional development planning in future school years. Because professional time is a negotiated item, only four sessions are mandated, and the committee felt as though a sample of each would be the best avenue to give teachers the opportunity to sample various social-emotional support. In addition, the committee believed the strongest support that could be given to teachers through professional development was choice (see Figure 4 for framework of the Professional Development Strands for the 2018-19 school year).



Date	Sept 17	Oct 15	Nov 12	Feb 4
<i>Strand</i>				
Teacher Wellness <i>Researcher</i>	Building Relationships Teacher D/ Researcher	Teacher Care Package Teacher F/Teacher G	Peer Support Teacher G/ Researcher	Mindfulness Teacher F/ Teacher I
Technology <i>Teacher A</i>	Classroom Management with Chromebooks Teacher E	Google Certification Teacher A	Chrome Extensions Teacher C	AR/VR Teacher E
Student Wellness <i>Teacher B</i>	Impact of Trauma on Student Learning Teacher F	Recognizing Drug Use in the classroom Teacher H	Student Panel on Cultural Norms Teacher B	Bullying/Safe Connections Teacher J
Technology Fridays <i>Teacher C</i>	Lunch and Learn			




Figure 4. Professional Development Strands for the 2018-19 Academic Year

The Fun Friday feature of social emotional support helped spur the mind shift about professional development. One aspect Fun Fridays changed was the acceptance and encouragement to have fun at school. Another mind shift was that relationship building is not a personal hobby, but rather, it is a professional responsibility. Opportunities provided and encouraged by administration no longer needed an endgame of student achievement on a test, nor did teachers need to take away something specific to utilize in the classroom to be effective (see Table 2 noting the Fun Friday Activities for the 2018-19 school year).

Table 2

Fun Friday Activities for the 2018-19 School Year

Date	Event Title	Focus/ Theme
August 17, 2018	Energy Bite and Fresh Fruit Breakfast	Appreciation
August 24, 2018	Coffee Cart Delivery	Appreciation
August 31, 2018	Walk a Mile with a Peer	Relationship Building
September 7, 2018	Staff Tailgate Before Football Game	Relationship Building
September 14, 2018	Healthy Veggie Snack with Greek Yogurt	Appreciation
September 21, 2018	Color a Postcard and Send to an MHS Alum Serving in Military	Appreciation
September 28, 2018	Family Homecoming Carnival	Relationship Building
October 5, 2018	Trivia Friday Staff Edition	Relationship Building
October 12, 2018	Hot Apple Cider Delivery	Appreciation
October 19, 2018	Write a Positive Referral and Contact Parent	Appreciation
October 26, 2018	No School	
November 2, 2018	Halloween Candy Swap	Relationship Building
November 9, 2018	Snow Day Pick 'Em/Donuts and Coffee with Principal	Appreciation
November 16, 2018	Make Thanksgiving Meals for Needy Families	Relationship Building
November 30, 2018	Nature Walk with Peer	Relationship Building
December 7, 2018	Department Twitter Battle	Relationship Building
December 14, 2018	Festive Sweater Day	Relationship Building
December 21, 2018	Staff Breakfast Off Campus at	Relationship Building
January 4, 2019	Energy Bite and Fresh Fruit Breakfast	Appreciation
January 11, 2019	Hot Tea in the Staff Workroom	Appreciation
January 18, 2019	Early Release Day	
January 25, 2019	Make a Meme	Appreciation
February 1, 2019	15 Minute Heart Health Walk with a Peer	Relationship Building

Many of the Fun Friday Activities “forced” teachers to get out of their classroom during lunch or their plan period. Often, it sparked interaction among colleagues who do not normally interact, and it was intended to be a way for staff to take a break from the grind of teaching. Another intended impact was the encouragement for teachers to “go for a walk” with a colleague during their plan period (see Appendix A for Description of Fun Friday Activities). The message was clear from administration by building this in to the Fun Friday schedule- it is ok to take a walk if needed, rather, you need to take a walk with a colleague occasionally. It is good for the mind and body, and the administration encourages it.

Fun Fridays also attempted to get insight on whether staff members would participate in small, short professional development opportunities. Opportunities categorized as “appreciation” required little interaction with peers and minimal disruption in the normal routine, and they might have offered a small incentive such as food, coffee, or a ticket for a drawing. Opportunities categorized as “relationship building,” forced teachers to interact with others and get out of a normal routine, and there was no incentive other than the opportunity to interact with peers. The participation rates in Fun Fridays attempted to gain insight as to whether staff would actively participate in relationship building as well as what types of relationship building they are looking for. Additionally, analyzing participation rates between “appreciation” and “relationship building” gave insight on staff desire to seek out relationship building opportunities and how influential incentives might be for teachers to participate in social emotional support. In other words, are staff more likely to participate in social emotional support if food,

drink, or other compensation are offered, or are staff members just participating for the free food and drink?

The social emotional support for teachers through professional development and other choice opportunities was implemented in addition to and not in place of other professional development opportunities. Staff still had the opportunity to learn specific content if that was desired. In fact, with two learning walks arranged in which teachers can observe their peers, Technology Fridays, district level professional development mandated on four separate half days, along with the various workshops offered give staff a wide variety of specific content to learn. The “in addition” to framing was important as many teachers look for specific content and a specific learning outcome in professional development. Strictly offering social emotional support would be counterproductive as choice in the professional development is a vital piece of supporting teachers and not offering content specific professional development might increase anxiety for some staff members.

Procedure

This dissertation in practice research was developed and administered over two years, and it is ongoing. It contains three distinct phases that are outlined (see Figure 5 Professional Development Timeline for the 2018-19 Academic Year). The three phases include but are not limited to development, implementation, analysis, and future planning. The study not only implemented programming and analyzed data from the 2018-19 professional development school year, but the insight gained will be used in future professional development planning.

Stage	Date	Action / Accomplishment
Milestone	August 2016	Began Ed.D. Program at UMSL
Development	March 2017	Conduct high school professional development steering committee evaluation educator survey 2017
	June 2017	Superintendent told group of administrators, "If a teacher needs to play basketball during his or her plan period to be a better teacher, let them play basketball."
	September-December 2017	1. Brainstorm professional development model that offers social emotional support as a choice for teachers 2. Review relevant literature
	April 2018	Administer high school professional development steering committee evaluation educator survey 2018
Implementation	May 2018	Development of professional development model that includes social emotional support for teachers
	May 2018	Dissertation in Practice Study Approved
Analysis	Summer 2018	IRB Approval
	September 2018	Begin professional development for the 2018-19 school year that offers social emotional support
	March 2019	Analyze participant data
Future Planning	May 2019	Recommendations and plans for 2019-20 school year
Milestone	June 2019	Defend Dissertation in Practice

Figure 5. Professional Development Timeline for the 2018-19 Academic Year

Phase 1- Development

Phase one involved analyzing the 2018 professional development survey administered by the researcher in conjunction with the professional development steering committee in March of 2018. The researcher oversees professional development at a large, suburban high school. This initial survey intended to gather information regarding teacher needs in professional development as well as gaps in professional development programming (see Appendix B for 2018 Professional Development survey). The survey contained both open and closed questions to gather data regarding:

- A) Relevance of professional development in the past
- B) Interest in various professional development topics
- C) Overall feelings as an educator and willingness to learn

Question 19 in that survey provided qualitative feedback regarding professional development opportunities and what the staff potentially was looking for. The use of this short answer data provides context that quantitative data cannot completely reveal. Staff shared the following comments in their feedback in the 2017-18 professional development staff survey that influenced planning for the 2018-19 academic year:

- * “I liked that there were options in which to choose. However, I think it would be more helpful to choose an option if the description of the session was more clear as well as what subject might most benefit” (Teacher 1, Professional Development Survey, Spring 2018).
- * “We need to help teachers to feel appreciated and respected. They need to learn to take care of themselves in order to take care of kids. How do we help them?” (Teacher 2, Professional Development Survey, Spring 2018).
- * “My suggestion is to keep in mind to differentiate - maybe offer a few different types of PD (which I think was done this year) and allow people to choose” (Teacher 3, Professional Development Survey, Spring 2018).

That qualitative feedback, along with the quantitative data led the researcher to develop social emotional support for teachers as a strand of professional development (see Figure 6 Initial 2018 Teacher Wellness Interest Level for 2018-19 PD Planning).

Teacher Wellness Interest Level

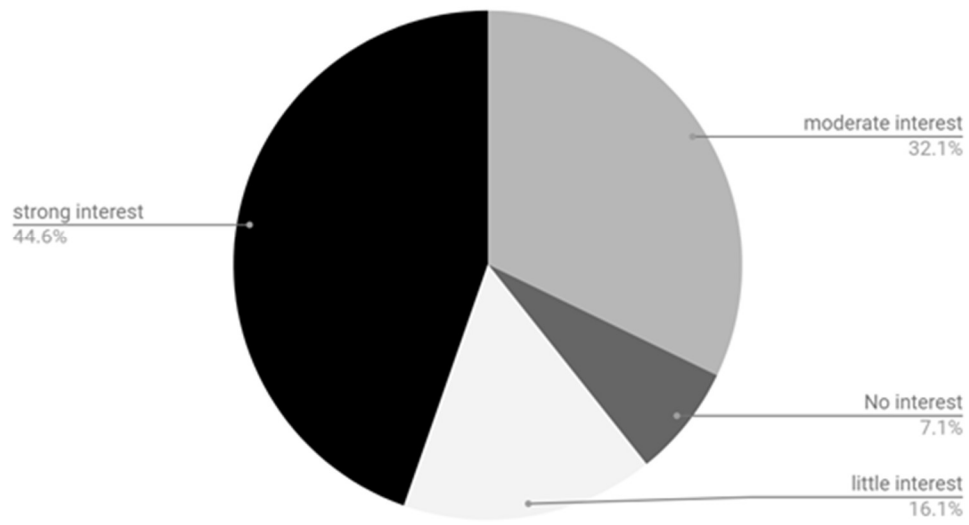


Figure 6. Initial 2018 Teacher Wellness Interest Level for 2018-19 PD Planning

At the end of that survey, teachers were asked, “In terms of social and emotional support for teachers, what topics would you find most useful and relevant? (Examples: relationship building, coping with stress, time management, conflict management, mindfulness)” Some of the most repeated topics included:

“coping with stress”, “Time management and relationship building would be great!”, “Developing our culture among staff to show that we are united, maybe relationship building would fit this need,” “creating a positive environment”, “create a balance between work and home”, “building teacher relationships outside of departments- maybe more opportunities to get together”, “mindfulness,” ”yoga.”

That initial survey in the Spring 2018 indicated social emotional support for teachers was of interest, thus making it a strand of professional development as well as other choice opportunities central to the 2018-19 professional development model.

The 2018 climate survey also influenced including social emotional support in professional development (see Appendix 3 Sample Climate Survey Data). On a 4- point Likert scale, 95.4% of the staff felt as if “We smile, laugh, and have fun at this school.” Though that number is already high, it reiterated that social-emotional support for teachers is an important part of a school culture, and building leaders should do something to make this an emphasis in professional development.

Phase 2- Implementation

Surveys indicated social-emotional support along with relationship building were needs of the staff. The researcher moved to phase two, implementation of social emotional support through professional development and other choice opportunities. Implementation included professional development as well as the collection of data immediately following each professional development session. Collecting data during implementation was completed by a survey after each of the four professional development offerings. Closed questions, using both multiple choice and five-point Likert scale, as well as short answer responses were analyzed based on demographic information that included but was not limited to subject area and years in education. The primary focus for the analysis of the surveys included:

- A. Frequency of choosing social emotional support
- B. Interest level in professional development topics
- C. Perceived relevance of social emotional support

- D. Satisfaction with content of social emotional support
- E. Potential takeaways from social emotional support
- F. Interest level of social emotional support components

Social emotional support was such a new concept that this research could be considered emerging and ongoing.

Phase 3- Analysis

Participants of professional development were given a survey following each of the four professional development sessions. Participation was voluntary, and all four surveys were identical except that the “Fun Friday” selections were different as the offerings were different each Friday. The data was analyzed to gain overall insight on impact of social emotional support offered through professional development and other choice opportunities.

Data Analysis Procedures

After the professional development was completed, and the surveys were completed and returned, data was examined for trends, correlations, and other connections. As information was gathered, data obtained influenced some of the additional choice activities. Anticipated and unanticipated trends developed throughout the semester. For example, one anticipated trend that emerged was that if food or some other incentive was offered during a choice activity, it had a spike in participation. Even more so, if the food or drink was delivered, it had an even higher rate of participation. Conversely, one unanticipated trend was that when teachers that chose social emotional support as a strand, they also happen to be the same group that had the highest amount of satisfaction in choices given. It was anticipated that many would choose social emotional

support because none of the other options interested them. In addition, it was not anticipated that teachers seeking social emotional support were just as interested in building relationships as they were in self-care.

When the professional development session was completed and surveys were returned, data was analyzed for trends through the use of graphs and spreadsheets created with the use of Google Tools. As each professional development was subsequently completed, results from each session were compared. When all four sessions were completed, data were reviewed and analyzed from each set both separately and collectively. At the end of phase three, data were used to answer the key research questions to complete the research regarding social emotional support through professional development and other choice opportunities.

Chapter 4: Results

The objective of the research was to analyze the attitudes and interest of teachers regarding social-emotional support. The researcher surveyed all professional development participants no matter what strand they participated. This section will present both quantitative results and qualitative data taken from the surveys through the use of open and closed questions.

The results measured attitudes toward professional development and the researcher specifically analyzed participants of the social emotional strand. After each session, over 150 surveys were sent to certified staff that participated. Response rate to those surveys varied with each survey. Regarding participation, it is important to note that not all participants of professional development completed the survey. The survey was sent only once, and the researcher did not send out reminders for the staff to

complete (see Figure 7 for Post Data Survey Participation Rate). While a higher survey participation rate would provide more information, research by Hamilton (2009) indicates online survey participation rate average is around 30% (as cited in Saldivar, 2012, p. 9). Additionally, the University of Texas at Austin Center for Teaching and Learning (2017) noted that an email participation rate of 50% is considered good (as cited in Saldivar, 2012, p. 9). Compared to averages, this participation rate is the norm, but it is unclear if the surveys are an accurate and reliable sample size. Overall demographic data such as every teachers' years of experience were not available to the researcher as the district did not have this information in a database.

All four surveys asked the same questions and analysis occurred after each survey was completed as well as collectively after all four were completed. Analysis of the surveys included but was not limited to the following areas:

1. Satisfaction of professional development options
2. Relevance and usefulness of the professional development session
3. Type of social emotional support teachers prefer
4. Attendance at each professional development session

Date	RSVP Total	RSVP Rate	Survey Total Respondent Total	Survey Rate	Overall PD Attendance
September 17, 2018	122	81%	78	52%	150
October 15, 2018	116	84%	59	42%	138
November 12, 2018	101	73%	97	70%	138
February 4, 2019	115	75%	71	46%	153

Figure 7. Professional Development Post Data Survey Participation Rate for 2018-19 Academic Year

A key point with the survey return data was the fact that not all staff members are represented as there was less than a 100% return rate on RSVPs as well as surveys. The first analysis completed focused on the return rate of both the RSVP and the survey. Comparisons were made between the RSVP and survey total versus the actual attendance for each session (see Figure 8 for RSVP Rate Compared to Attendance Rate for 2018-19 PD Sessions).

Date	Strand	RSVP Selection	Survey Response Rate	Actual Attendance Rate	Adjusted RSVP Rate
September 17, 2018	Student Wellness	31%	37%	35%	25%
September 17, 2018	Technology	43%	37%	41%	35%
September 17, 2018	Teacher Wellness	26%	30%	27%	21%
October 15, 2018	Student Wellness	54%	59%	45%	45%
October 15, 2018	Technology	25%	23%	18%	21%
October 15, 2018	Teacher Wellness	21%	26%	30%	17%
November 12, 2018	Student Wellness	59%	41%	56%	43%
November 12, 2018	Technology	20%	34%	26%	14%
November 12, 2018	Teacher Wellness	21%	25%	24%	15%
February 12, 2019	Student Wellness	22%	25%	23%	16%
February 12, 2019	Technology	38%	37%	45%	28%
February 12, 2019	Teacher Wellness	40%	38%	31%	30%

Figure 8. RSVP Rate Compared to Attendance Rate for 2018-19 PD Sessions

The data for the RSVPs, surveys and overall attendance was not as precise as the researcher desired. As explained earlier and specifically noted in the data, not every staff member responded to the RSVP or survey. Regarding social emotional support for teachers specifically, neither RSVP nor survey returns were over 40% in any of the

sessions. In addition, true attendance data taken when teachers signed in proved to be the most accurate account of teacher interest in a particular strand. Teachers that were absent from school, whether that is for personal or professional reasons, were not required to make-up the professional development session. Attendance was taken by hand when teachers arrived, thus on October 15 and February 4, the attendance percent is less than 100% most likely because teachers forgot to sign in, or they participated in summer professional development and were allowed to be excused from one professional session this school year. It is important to note there could be some randomness on who filled out the survey after the professional development, but even that data was analyzed to see if there is a pattern for who filled out the survey. On both September 17 and November 12, the attendance rates add up to over 100%. This was due to the fact that special school district is not required to participate in professional development, but on those occasions, many SSD staff members did participate in professional development, and while they were not required, a spike in attendance to a particular session illustrates a spike in interest level.

Interestingly, during the third offering of professional development, only 101 staff members, the fewest of the four amounts, selected a session to attend in advance. Conversely, 97 staff members, the most of any session, sent in post session survey responses. Additionally, the adjusted RSVP rate is the percent of participants that RSVP'd for a strand divided by actual number of participants in the stand. If the adjusted RSVP rate is significantly lower than the RSVP rate, that would indicate a large number of walk-ups attended the session, and it would be valuable to the research to see if there were other attendance trends with particular strands.

One interesting aspect of the survey return rate data was that in both the student wellness strands and teacher wellness stands, three of the four sessions had survey return rates higher than the actual RSVP rates, though on all four occasions overall RSVP rates were higher than post survey return rates. Only once, on November 12, the technology strand returned a higher survey rate than RSVPs. One conclusion from this survey response result could be a measurement of participant interest in the professional development they are attending. In other words, when the survey response rate is higher than the RSVP rate, this could be an indication in the impact the professional development made, whether positive or negative. When survey participation outpaces actual RSVPs, it could be because the actual professional development compelled participants to complete the survey. In other words, the professional development might have engendered favorable or unfavorable feelings, and this might have motivated survey response. Conversely, another reason for the disparity could be that the attendees made a last-minute decision on attendance because none of the choices sparked the desire to RSVP to attend, but the actual professional development sparked them to complete the survey.

Demographic data analysis in all four surveys had consistency (see Figure 9 Average Years of Classroom Experience of Teachers Surveyed, 2018-19). Educators with 1-3 years of experience counted for the smallest demographic in all four surveys while educators with 21+ years counted for the second lowest demographic. Teachers with 4-11 and 12-20 years combined made up for more than 60% on all four surveys. The 4-11 and 12-20 years of experience demographic alternated as the largest demographic on all four occasions. According to the state's Department of Elementary

and Secondary Education, teachers at the studied school have an average of 14.2 years of experience. This experience level is slightly higher than the state average of 13.8 years of experience. Both the survey data and actual school demographics indicate most of the teachers have more than three years of experience, thus they are likely seeking development different than that of a new teacher or one with just a few years of experience.

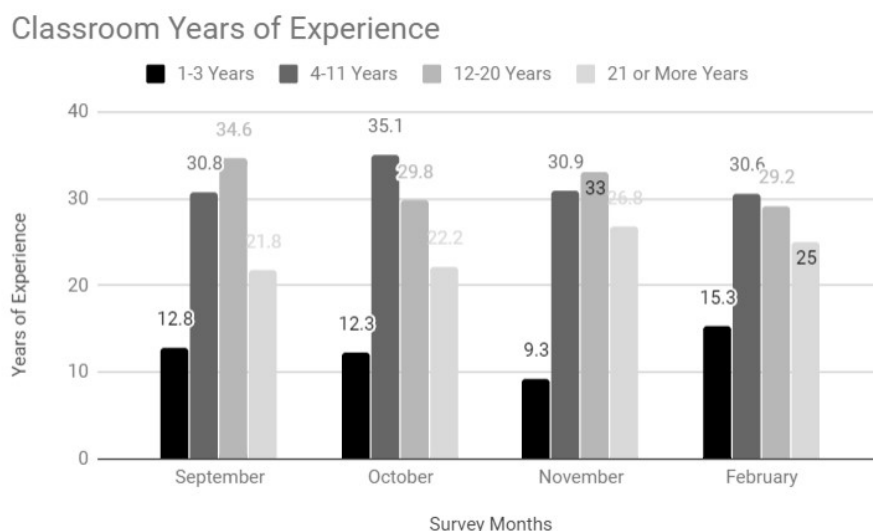


Figure 9. Average Years of Classroom Experience of Teachers Surveyed, 2018-19

Core Research Question #1

If given the option, will teachers choose to participate in social-emotional support versus more traditional professional development?

The results of this survey identified the frequency in which teachers would attend social emotional support versus more traditional professional development. The more traditional professional development is either student centered or contains a specific learning target. In terms of the professional development strands offered during the 2018-19 year, normal professional development options were either the technology or student wellness strands. Both of those had specific learning targets whether it was a

technology target or student target. Regarding student wellness, sessions focused on such specific topics as recognizing student drug use, bullying, and the impact of trauma on students (see Appendix D for Professional Development Strands).

Each survey contained ten questions that asked the same question (see Appendix E Professional Development Feedback Survey). The first three questions were basic demographic questions used to analyze basic demographic information. The questions included years in education, subject area, and the strand of professional development selected. Those questions were followed by four Likert-type questions collecting opinions on interest, relevance, and satisfaction with the professional development. An eighth open ended question asked respondents for something they can transfer to the classroom. The ninth question collected data on the types of social emotional support staff members are looking for in the future. The final question simply asked respondents to identify the choice opportunities they have participated in recently. Attendance was collected at each session, and that respective data was analyzed in conjunction with the survey data. As explained in the methods section, the number of respondents to each of the four surveys varied after each session.

Another initial question of note analyzed the strand each staff member chose to participate. In terms of teacher wellness, that strand was never the unanimous top selection for staff members to attend. In both September and November, it was the lowest attended option for staff members, and both of those sessions focused on relationship building. The data illustrates some inconsistency in choosing strands for professional development (see Figure 10 Teacher Wellness, Student Wellness, Technology PD Participants Survey by Month, 2018-19). No particular strand was the

number one selection in all four offerings. In September, technology was the number one choice for teachers at 37.2%. That particular session focused on Chromebook management. The fact that the school supplied Chromebooks to every student in 2018 for the first time likely influenced that particular popularity of that strand. In October, the student wellness strand garnered 50.9% participation rate. That particular session focused on recognizing drug use in the classroom. In November, the student wellness strand that had a student panel discussing cultural norms had the highest rate of participation at 41.2%. These results would indicate that the specific topic was what influenced the professional development choice and not a strand or theme like teacher wellness. The only month that teacher wellness was the highest attended session was in February. Interestingly, that February offering, had two different choices to attend under the teacher wellness umbrella and that would further validate the notion that the specific professional development topic was more influential in selection than a general theme. More specifically, teachers were not necessarily drawn to social-emotional support in general, but they might be drawn to a particular aspect of social-emotional support. While teachers indicated they wanted more social-emotional support, analysis of data indicated the types of social-emotional support teachers are looking for varies.

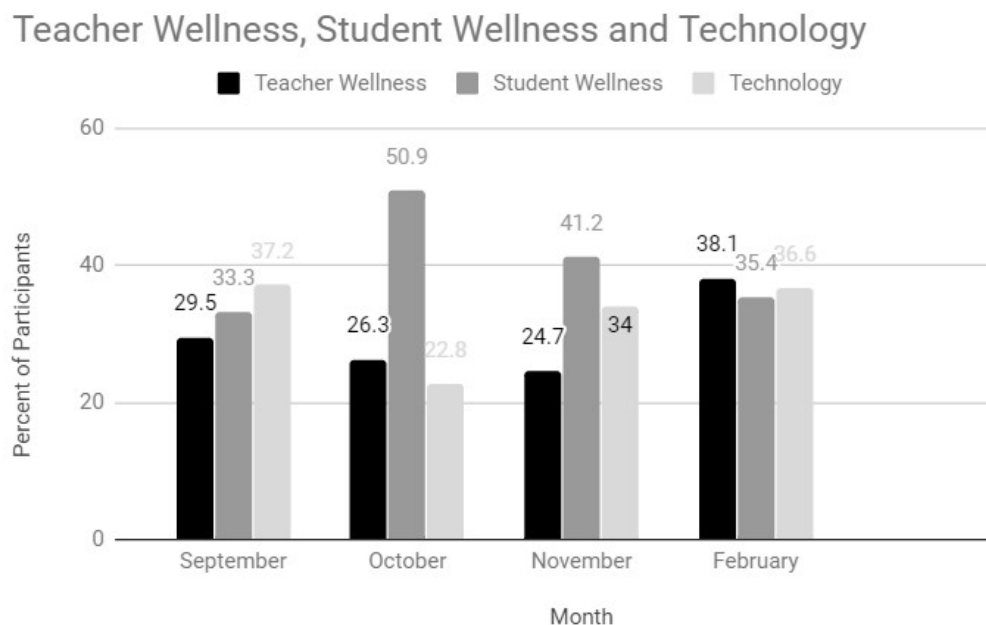


Figure 10. Teacher Wellness, Student Wellness, Technology PD Participants Survey by Month, 2018-19.

While analyzing the surveys by month, data indicated that teachers would not necessarily choose social emotional support because it is social emotional support, rather the choice was determined by the specific content, thus results indicated overall most teachers will not choose social-emotional support over traditional professional development when given the opportunity. Overall, most staff members participated in professional development directly tied to students or technology. Participation in social-emotional support arguably would have been even less considering it was the only option during one of the seven hours. Additionally, even if teachers did not have a complete understanding of social emotional support early in the year as professional development was being rolled out for the 2018-19 school year, as the year moved forward, participation in social emotional support did not increase. According to the surveys after

the professional development session, only three teachers attended social emotional support on all four occasions. This could indicate that while a variety of staff members attended social emotional support at least once, momentum did not build and participation in social emotional support did not increase. More specifically, at least 23 teachers attended social emotional support in September, and of those 23, only three stayed constant in that strand through the remainder of the year.

When data from all four surveys were combined, results indicated a similar trend that a majority of teachers did not necessarily choose social emotional support. Overall, teachers chose student wellness 39.2% of the time, technology 31.9% of the time, and teacher wellness 28.9% of the time (see Figure 11 Overall PD Choice of Teachers, Pre-Survey Data 2018-19). Data does not necessarily indicate teachers will not choose social emotional support, but it did indicate teachers will choose professional development focused on students at a higher rate than professional development focused on teachers.

Analyzing the data each month individually indicated teachers were focused more on the specific content rather than the general theme of professional development. Examining the survey data collectively indicated teachers chose professional development focused on students before professional development focused on self. Analysis individually and collectively indicated teachers will not necessarily choose social emotional support over traditional professional development unless a particular aspect of the social emotional support attracts them.

Overall Choice

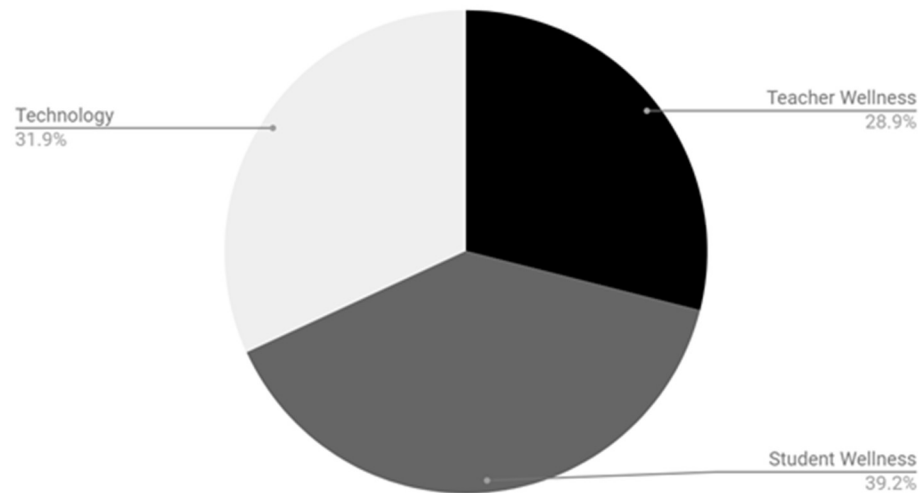


Figure 11. Overall PD Choice of Teachers, Pre-Survey Data 2018-19

While teachers did not necessarily choose social emotional support most of the time, survey results indicated when teachers choose social emotional support, that selection was more purposeful than when teachers choose other strands. On a five-point Likert scale, teachers were given the statement, “There were choices in professional development that interested me.” A score of one indicated strong disagreement and five indicated strong agreement. Overall, all three strands averaged over a four regarding interest level. Teachers that chose technology had a 4.07 interest level, student wellness had a 4.12 interest level, and teacher wellness had a 4.26 interest level (see Figure 12 Overall Interest Level of Choices in Professional Development Strands for 2018-19 on a Five Point Likert Scale). Teachers that chose social emotional support were more intentional in their choice than those that chose the other strands. Conversely, the data indicated that teachers did not necessarily choose social emotional support as a “default” in their choice. If teachers were unsure of what to choose or had no interest in topics,

they were more likely to choose something student centered or the more familiar traditional professional development. Results did indicate that the less interest teachers had in the topics, the less likely they were to choose social emotional support.

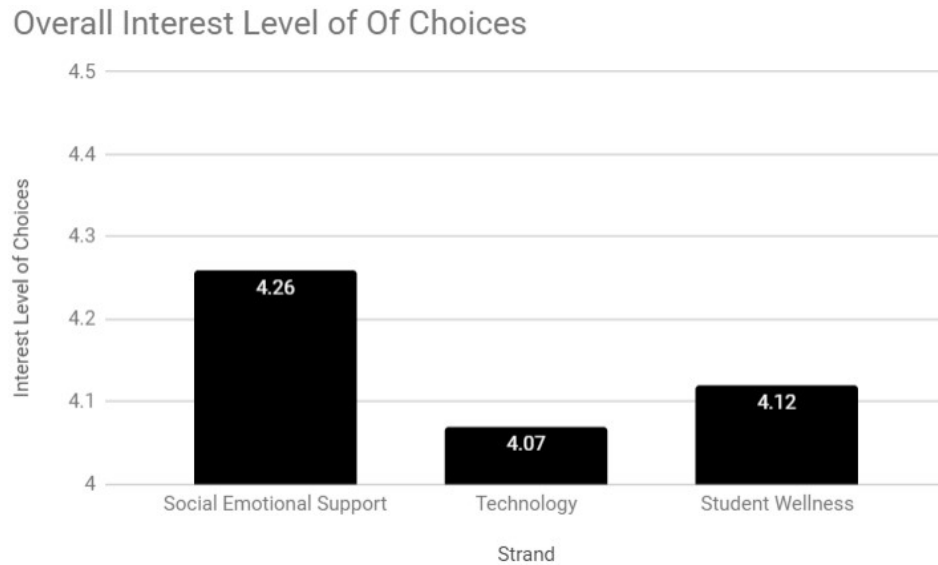


Figure 12. Overall Interest Level of Choices in Professional Development Strands for 2018-19 on a Five Point Likert Scale.

Core Research Question #1 Findings- If given the option, will teachers choose to participate in social-emotional support versus more traditional professional development?

- Teacher choice is based on interest in specific, targeted content.
- Teachers care more about student wellness than their own wellness
- Teachers will default to professional development focused on students

Core Research Question #2

What type of social emotional support are various teachers looking for?

The results of this survey identified what types of professional development staff members desired. The three types of social-emotional support options that were offered were relationship building, self-care, and stress management (see Appendix 4 Strands of

Professional Development). There are other types of social-emotional support potentially offered such as mindfulness, setting goals, and decision making, but these three were the focus of the 2018-19 school year. In terms of the sessions offered for the 2018-19 school year, two focused on relationship building, one focused on self-care, and the final focused on stress management. Among all four sessions, there was some overlap. For example, relationship building can impact stress management, and certainly stress management can impact self-care. None of the three offerings are mutually exclusive, however, the intent of each session was clearly defined during the planning process. Results of this survey regarding the types of social-emotional support desired will be used for future planning of professional development.

The results of this survey remained consistent throughout the four sessions (see Figure 13 Mean Score of Teacher Interest Level for Teacher Wellness, Student Wellness, Technology PD Sessions for 2018-19). Overall, teachers were the most interested in stress management with relationship building as the next choice. Self-care was a distant third choice on all four surveys. Similar to the traditional or content specific professional development, stress management is a specific narrow goal, while the concept of self-care is extremely broad. Theoretically, self-care can impact stress management, but the concept itself may not be specific enough as data would indicate teachers are looking for specific learning to take place in professional development and not a broad concept. While relationship building can be considered a concept, it is more specific than self-care. In other words, if teachers feel like they need to make more connections with staff members at school, then relationship building can help accomplish that goal. Conversely, self-care might be considered too broad of a concept for teachers to find something

specific they are looking for. Self-care could include but is not limited to stress management, healthy eating, exercise, time management, organization, positive habits, etc. Teachers looking for specific learning, may not necessarily see it in self-care as it is not content specific enough.

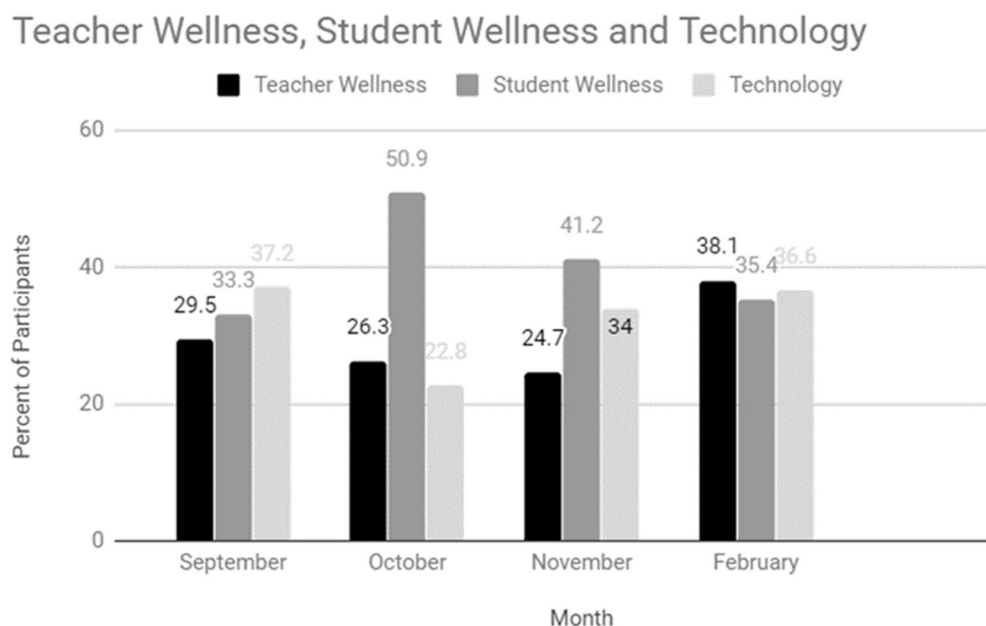


Figure 13. Mean Score of Teacher Interest Level for Teacher Wellness, Student Wellness, Technology PD Sessions for 2018-19.

The survey indicated most teachers were interested in stress management and relationship building. As discussed in the literature review, teachers felt stressed, so teacher interest in stress management was not surprising. In response to the question, “For future planning, which component of social emotional support for teachers are you most interested? Stress Management, Self-Care, Relationship Building?” Teachers identified stress management at 40.1%, relationship building 36.5%, and self-care 23.4% (see Figure 14 Overall Social Emotional Topic Preference from 2018-19 Teacher Surveys).

Overall Social Emotional Preference

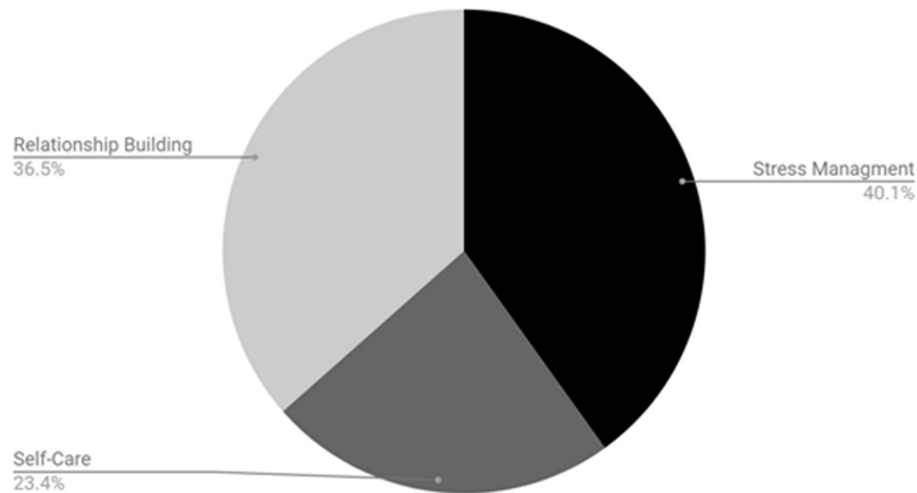


Figure 14. Overall Social Emotional Topic Preference from 2018-19 Teacher Surveys

Similar to the conclusions regarding choice, stress management and relationship building are more specific and targeted. If a staff member feels isolated in such a large campus, the way to alleviate that feeling is to attend a professional development targeted toward relationship building. With results that seemed that choice was influenced by overall impact on students, it was interesting that relationship building was such a desired aspect of professional development.

The qualitative data reinforces relationship building had social emotional benefits for the staff and was valued. “Sometimes it sounded like the most fun activity to do. It was nice getting to know other teachers in the building, and because we are so spread out it was nice to see people you don't see very often and get to know them. I had a nice time getting to walk the track with some of my colleagues and learning, and just like the kids need brain breaks, teachers need a break sometimes, too” (Teacher 4, Exit Emotional Support Survey, 25 February 2019).

Qualitative data also reinforced the notion that relationship building is an integral component of a school and social emotional support. “I believe it's important to make connections with others in your work place. It creates a more collaborative and positive environment when you get to know others on a different level than “work”. Our school is very large and I chose this professional development because I felt it was important to get to know other teachers in the building and develop better relationships with those teachers” (Teacher 6, Exit Emotional Support Survey, 25 February 2019). In addition, a second teacher stated, “As teachers in a school that is this big, we seldom get to meet each other so these little get together at a little camaraderie and make it feel as though we are more connected as a school” (Teacher 7, Exit Emotional Support Survey, 25 February 2019). Another teacher explained, “It is easy for teachers to feel like they're in a "bubble" within their department. There are very few opportunities to socialize and meet other colleagues throughout the building. Creating a positive relationship between staff members is beneficial for fostering unity in the school culture” (Teacher 8, Exit Emotional Support Survey, 25 February 2019). One particular analysis regarding relationship building proved to be interesting. In both September and November, the social emotional support offered focused on building relationships. On both occasions, only 12.3 and 9.8 percent of staff members made up teachers with 1-3 years of experience. Even with that small representation in data, building relationships still attracted 29.5 and 24.7 percent of the staff (see Figure 13 Mean Score of Teacher Interest Level for Teacher Wellness, Student Wellness, Technology PD Sessions for 2018-19). Those results would indicate many teachers are still looking for ways to build positive relationships, and that is not just a strand for new teachers. Teachers are constantly

looking for ways to make connections. In fact, analyzing the three staff members that chose social emotional support for all four session, two of those teachers are first year teachers, and the other has been teaching 21 or more years, more specifically, he has been teaching 30 plus years.

Even though stress management was the social emotional support that many teachers were looking for, when it was specifically offered in February, only 26.8% of staff attended the mindfulness session that taught techniques in handling stress. In fact, that particular session focused on stress management and mindfulness was led by a certified psychologist, and even so, more teachers chose to go to the traditional professional development session that focused on virtual reality. While teachers are looking for stress management, if it is offered as a choice, it is still less of a priority to teachers when compared to something more content specific (see Figure 15 Social Emotional Support Preference Percentages for 2018-19).

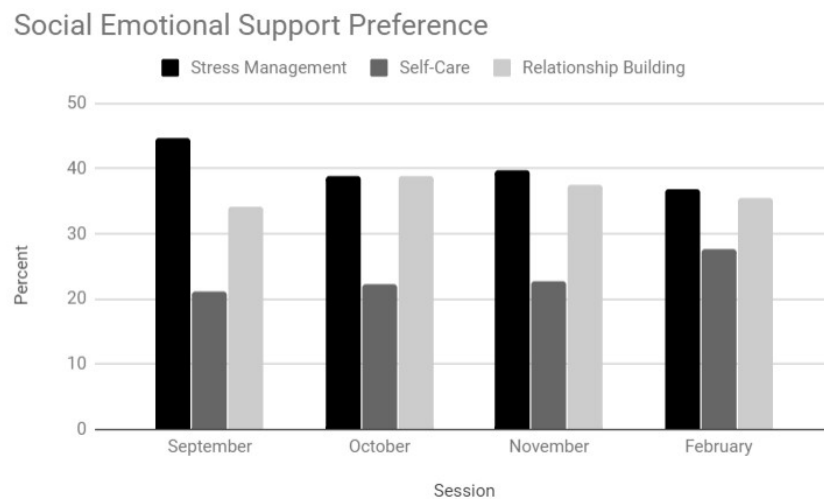


Figure 15. Social Emotional Support Preference Percentages for 2018-19

Survey data indicated self-care is a distant third when it comes to social-emotional support preference. Based on previous findings and conclusions, this could be because self-care is such a broad topic. Aspects of self-care could include such topics as nutrition, stress management, good habits, exercise, etc. Teachers have been told self-care is important, and they understand its impact. This is exemplified when a teacher wrote:

As teachers, we constantly give our attention, care, and patience to our students.

In order to be an effective teacher and a positive role model, we must take care of ourselves. If we are happy and healthy, we are more likely to provide a happy and healthy environment for the students in our classroom. Modeling self-care by setting the example is also something that students pick up on. (Teacher 9, Exit Emotional Support Survey, 25 February 2019)

That said, even with that understanding and encouragement, teachers were less likely to participate in self-care when offered even though many know it can benefit students too.

Core Research Question #2 Findings- What types of social-emotional supports are teachers looking for?

- Teachers are looking for specific targeted aspects of social emotional support
- Relationship building is important no matter the years of experience
- Self-Care is something teachers prefer to take care on their own, and while it is important, they do not prefer to take care of it at school

Core Research Question #3**Will teachers participate in social emotional supports offered through choice?**

Results of this survey analyzed staff participation in social emotional support was offered as strictly a voluntary choice. Regarding choice opportunities, there was absolutely no requirement for the staff to participate. The various types of choice opportunities were analyzed in this survey to determine what types of social-emotional choice opportunities staff chose to participate. This survey did not indicate the total participation in the choice opportunities as not every staff member filled out the survey. The data collected through this survey is a sample and can be used for future planning of choice opportunities. That future planning can include what types of choice opportunities to offer, or it could include a different marketing strategy of the choice offered.

Essentially, every Friday an opportunity was provided for staff to participate. It was marketed as “Fun Friday,” and the opportunities varied greatly. Most of the opportunities were on campus and during the school day, but a couple were outside of school hours and off campus. Some involved food, others asked staff to find a partner, and a couple required a simple click of the computer. “Fun Fridays” fell into one of two categories; they were categorized as either relationship building or appreciation. There could be overlap in the offerings, but each had a primary focus (see Appendix 2 List and Description of Fun Friday Events). In addition, appreciation could involve gifts for teachers, or teachers showing appreciation for someone else. On each of the four professional development surveys, teachers were asked what choice opportunities they participated, and results and participation varied, but a few trends developed.

On only six of the surveys did choice opportunities participation garner at least 50% participation. Five of those six choice opportunities directly involved food or drink during the school day. The sixth of those choice opportunities, the “snow day pick ‘em” asked staff to pick the date of the first snow day of 2018-19, and the winner received breakfast from a local restaurant the day school resumed. A couple of those choice opportunities that involved food were self-care related as they encouraged healthy snacks such as fruit and energy bites and also required staff to pick up in a designated area as to encourage conversation, relationship building, and getting out and about in the building. Interestingly, the choice opportunity that had the highest rate of participation was the hot apple cider delivery in October. For that opportunity, the researcher simply made his way around the school on a chilly Fall morning and offered teachers some warm apple cider between 8:30 and 10:00 am. It was simply a gesture of appreciation that did not involve relationship building, a health benefit, nor a way to decompress, yet it garnered the highest rate of participation at nearly 85%. Teachers were grateful for the cider, but outside of feeling appreciated that day, that particular choice offered no specific social-emotional benefit. In fact, it can be argued that the hot apple cider offered the least social emotional benefit as it is a beverage packed with sugar, offers no real nutritional value, and the staff did not have to exercise or interact to participate.

Results from the survey indicate teachers are less than likely to participate in social-emotional support through various choice activities (see Figure 16 Percent of Teacher Participation in Fun Friday Choices Based on Theme 2018-19). Such activities as walking a mile with a peer for heart health did not garner as much participation as having a drink delivered. Appreciation can be considered an aspect of social-emotional

support, but it is one that takes much less effort than relationship building or mindfulness. Based on the results, teachers are less than likely to break with their routine to participate in choice opportunities. Taking time from a planning period to go for a walk or participate in trivia is not something teachers were likely to do.

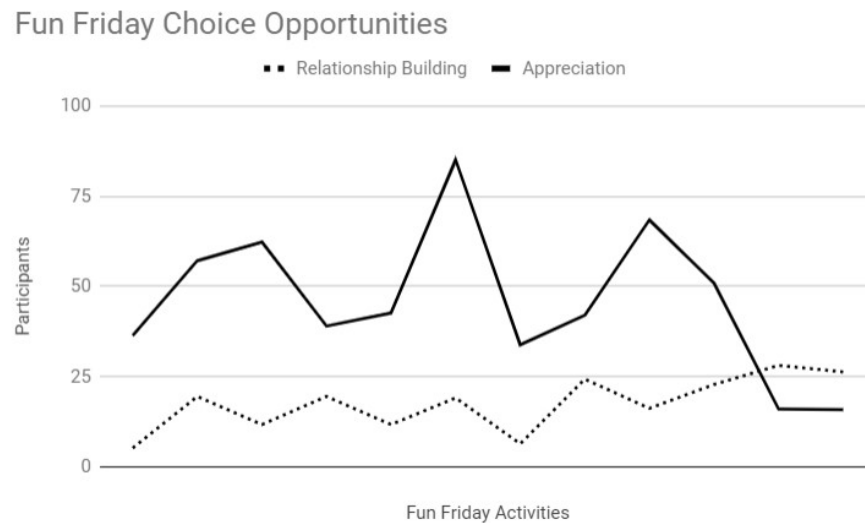


Figure 16. Percent of Teacher Participation in Fun Friday Choices Based on Theme 2018-19

A deeper dive with the “Fun Friday” data might indicate that small incentives might be something teachers need in order to do something out of the norm.

Qualitative data indicate that participating teachers are appreciative of the “Fun Friday” concept, and they are thankful for the opportunity to participate in social-emotional support through choice. This is evident in teacher responses as one teacher responded to the question, *What value in meeting others did you derive from the professional development or the other choice opportunities like "Lunch and Learn" or "Fun Fridays?"* with the following response:

With a faculty and building as big as [ours], there are many adults that I see who I do not know what their names are. Also, simply walking through the halls people

might assume that they have nothing in common with a particular person and don't go out of the way to find out. Education is unique in that we have a large collection of people who have varied interests. This is not Edward Jones where everyone enjoys or is good at finance. I might assume that I have nothing in common with the 45-year-old female English teacher, but having Fun Fridays brings an opportunity to break down the barriers. (Teacher 10, Exit Emotional Support Survey, 25 February 2019)

As previously noted, teachers desired relationship building, but when it was offered, participation in relationship building activities was less than the interest level. It was something teachers wanted, but it was not necessarily something teachers took the time to do.

During the Fall semester of the 2018-19 school year, another choice opportunity was presented and offered to the staff that contained social-emotional support as a component. The professional development committee developed and introduced the Learning Walk. The concept was simple. On a specific day, teachers would volunteer to open their classroom for designated hours of a specific day or the entire day. Teachers with open classrooms would hang a sign on their door to designate the open room. Visiting teachers had the opportunity to stop by during their plan period. They could stop by for two minutes or stay the entire class period; it was up to them. After a teacher observed a class, they were instructed to send positive feedback to the teacher they observed. This feedback allowed a teacher to write something positive, and that simple act can have social-emotional benefits for the writer. In addition, teachers that opened their room would receive some positive feedback, and this too has a positive social

emotional effect for the recipient. Additionally, visiting another classroom provides an opportunity to build relationships along with seeing good teaching practices.

Learning walks were offered in both September and November as a choice. In the September installment, four staff member visited classrooms, and two of those staff members were counselors. In the November opportunity, again, four staff members visited open classroom, and three of those staff members were counselors. Visiting a classroom was strictly choice, and when given the opportunity, nearly the entire staff chose not to participate. Interestingly, when teachers were asked if they were interested in visiting classrooms, on September, 26 teachers said they were interested in visiting classrooms through the RSVP, and only four actively made visits to various rooms. In November, only six teachers said they were interested visiting classrooms, more than a 75% attrition from the first Learning Walk in September (see Figure 17 Learning Walk Predicted Versus and Actual Participation in 2018-19).

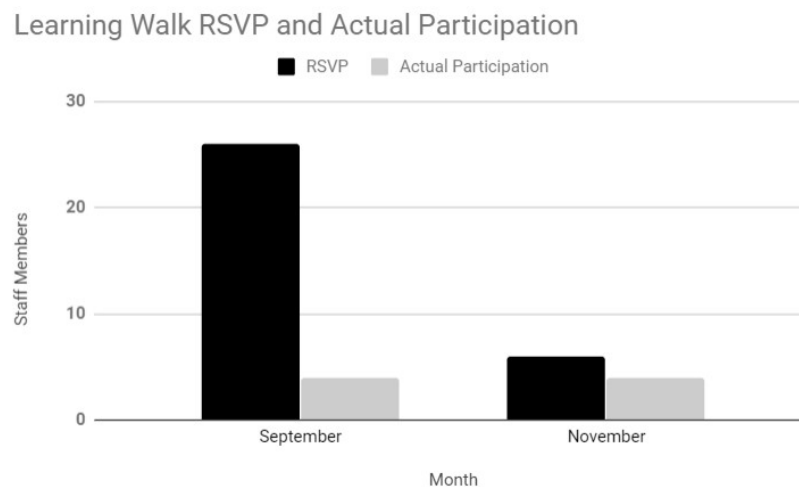


Figure 17. Learning Walk Predicted Versus and Actual Participation in 2018-19

The “Learning Walk” was a choice activity staff had to participate in during their planning period. Survey data concluded that teachers are more likely to spend their

planning period doing any other activity other than participating in choice professional development. These activities may include grading papers, making copies, returning phone calls or simply taking a breather, but voluntarily participating in professional development was unlikely to happen.

Qualitative data indicated teachers appreciate the ability to participate in social-emotional support through choice. One response summarizes the appreciation for social emotional support, and it also highlights the specificity each staff member may be searching for regarding social emotional support:

I think the most beneficial aspect is knowing that the administration supports and trusts its teachers to be professionals. If I am running on the treadmill during 7th hours, an administrator can assume that I have all my work done in my classroom and I am prepared for the next day. This has not been the case in all buildings I have worked in. In those buildings I feel the administrators don't get it. Just because we work in education where the day is started and finished with a bell does not mean that there can't be flexibility (Teacher 11, Exit Emotional Support Survey, 25 February 2019).

Teachers value the concept of social emotional support, but each teacher has a different need when it comes to social-emotional support. Additionally, the quote by teacher 11 illustrated the point that in terms of teacher self-care, many teachers participate in self-care on their terms.

Core Research Question #3 Findings- Will teachers participate in social emotional options through choice.

- Unless there is some incentive (food, drink, possibly financial) teachers are less than likely to participate in social emotional support through choice.
- If teachers address their social emotional health, they tend to prescribe their own social-emotional support

Core Research Question #4

Do teachers find social emotional support relevant to their practice?

Results of this survey analyzed whether teachers found social emotional support relevant to their practice. Data from this survey were compared with staff members that did not participate in social-emotional support to indicate if there were trends in terms of relevance. In other words, did staff members that participated in a relationship building activity find it more or less relevant than a staff member that participated in a technology focused professional development that is more concrete and transferable when speaking in terms of the learning. More specifically, do staff members find such an abstract subject as relationship building as relevant as something that is more content specific.

Data analyzed by month indicated some minor variance by month. Using a five-point Likert scale, staff members were asked, *How relevant and helpful do you think it will be for your job?* A score of one indicated not very, and a score of five indicated very much (see Figure 18 Perceived Relevance of Professional Development Strands 2018-19 on a Five Point Likert Scale). During the February session, teacher wellness scored its highest average at 4.4. The topics for that session were mindfulness and shortcuts to wellness. During the mindfulness session, teachers learned breathing strategies to cope with stress, and the shortcuts to wellness session gave teachers specific activities they

could do throughout a busy day. Those activities included such specific items as listening to audiobooks on walks, taking a 15-minute hallway walk during a planning period, sitting on a balance ball, using applesauce instead of butter in brownies. etc. There were a variety of options offered, thus there seemed to be a takeaway for everyone. Because there was such a wide variety, all teachers left the session with new learning that was simple, specific, and practical. There was at least one take-away in the session that increased the perceived relevance.

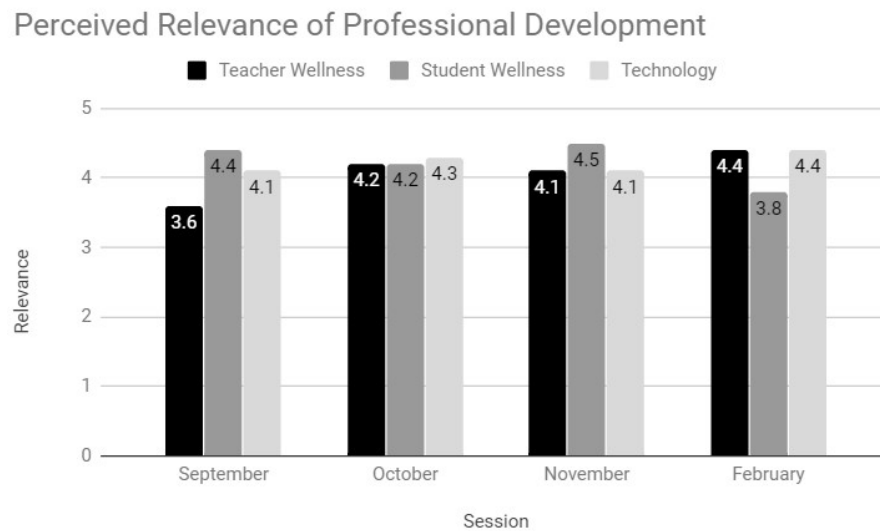


Figure 18. Perceived Relevance of Professional Development Strands 2018-19 on a Five Point Likert Scale

Both the September and November session focused on relationship building, and there was a *Building Scavenger Hunt*, and the November Session was titled *Building Relationships During a Meaningful Mile*. The descriptions for each session was as follows:

September- "Building Relationships with Fellow Staff Members"- Connect with other staff members through a fun interactive group activity. This session will be offered every hour 1-7.

November- "Building Relationships During a Meaningful Mile"- Teachers will participate in a discovery activity to learn more about each other while getting a dose of self-care and fresh air. Please dress for the weather along with comfortable shoes as this activity will take place outside barring precipitation. This session will be offered every hour 1-7.

During the September session, staff completed a scavenger hunt with other staff members around the campus (see Appendix G for Building Scavenger Hunt). Staff had to find random items and people in the building. The purpose was to have conversation during the hunt and become more acquainted with the campus. In November, the social-emotional support including walking a mile outside with peers. Interestingly, that day, it snowed in the afternoon, and the participants still wanted to go outside to walk. They walked four laps around the track, had a chance to get to know each other, and because of the snow, they had the choice to walk inside or outside. Clearly, the description for November was much more specific than September. Additionally, walking a mile is much more likely to be repeated than “taking a selfie with the registrar.” According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, relevance is defined as “the degree to which something is related or useful to what is happening or being talked about.” In other words, if staff members focused on the actual activities during the scavenger hunt and not purpose, the actual event may not seem relevant. The purpose during the November

session was to walk a mile with peers, and since that was the purpose and focus, it may have seemed more relevant.

The two sessions that garnered the highest score of relevance were both part of the student wellness strand. They average a 4.42 and 4.5. Their descriptions are below:

September- *"Impact of Trauma on Student Learning"*- Teachers will gain of the deep impact trauma has on students in the classroom (reading, group work, concentration, participation, testing, social interaction, etc.). This will be offered hours 1,2,3, and 5,6,7.

November- *"Cultural Norms"*- A student panel from a variety of student clubs will discuss cultural norms and concerns teachers may not be aware of. Clubs may include Muslim Student Association, Jewish Student Union, South Asian Student Organization, Marquette Academic and Cultural Club, African American Studies. This will be offered hours 1,2,3, and 5,6,7.

Those two sessions in the student wellness strand were specific and targeted. In addition, immediate connections could be made to the classroom, and the information gained could directly benefit students. This data indicated that teachers in this study were more likely to find professional development more relevant when it is targeted and directly tied to students.

A relationship between interest level and relevance surfaced in the research regarding social-emotional support through professional development (see Figure 19 Interest Level Compared to Relevance of Professional Development on a Five Point Likert Scale, 2018-19). When staff signed up for professional development, as mentioned earlier, those that signed up for social emotional support had the highest interest in choices offered. In the survey following the session, overall the level of

relevance was lower than the overall level of interest. In the other two strands, the overall level of relevance was higher than the overall interest level in the choices.

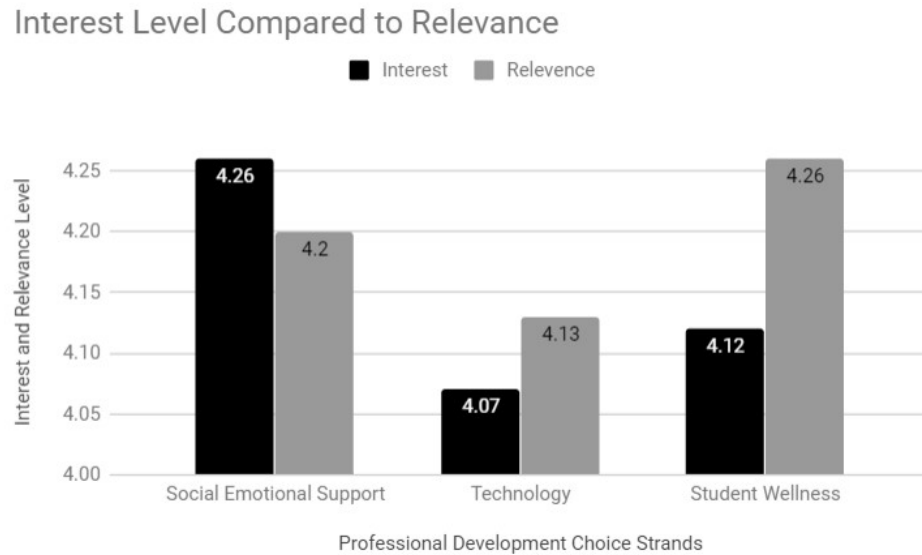


Figure 19. Interest Level Compared to Relevance of Professional Development on a Five Point Likert Scale, 2018-19

Using the a five-point Likert scale, staff members were asked *How satisfied were you with the session content?* A score of one indicated poor, and a score of five indicated excellent. Overall, staff members that participated in social-emotional support had the highest satisfaction level of session content (see Figure 20 Overall Satisfaction with Content of Professional Development by Strand in 2018-19 on a Five Point Likert Scale). Staff members that attended social-emotional support were more satisfied with the content of the sessions than those that attended the technology or student wellness strands. The researcher cannot conclude why staff were more satisfied with the content but follow up questions could be offered in future surveys to gain an understanding. One inference could be that staff members participating in social-emotional support were often doing something “fun,” thus staff members could have been focusing on the word

satisfaction in the survey. For example, while the staff was relationship building, they were encouraged to laugh and smile. If they did laugh and smile, this might give them a level of satisfaction or they could have been pleasantly surprised by the relevance of the content because they felt a connection to the topic.

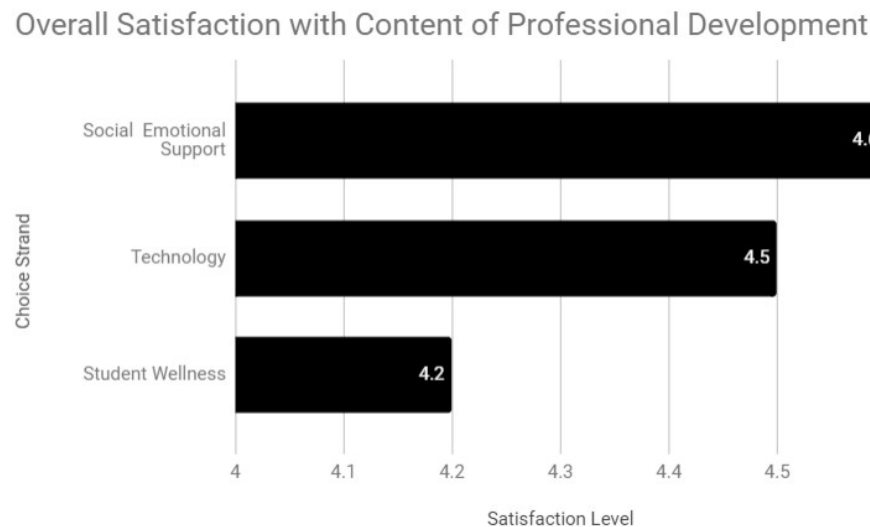


Figure 20. Overall Satisfaction with Content of Professional Development by Strand in 2018-19 on a Five Point Likert Scale

In comparing both the content satisfaction and relevance, while staff members found the content satisfying, they found it less relevant (see Figure 21 Content Satisfaction Level Compared to Relevance of Professional Development Strands in 2018-19 on a Five Point Likert Scale). Conversely, staff members that participated in student wellness activities had a higher level of relevance than satisfaction. Overall, staff members that participated in social emotional support were satisfied with the content, but data indicate while they were satisfied, they did not feel it was as relevant whereas staff members that participated in student wellness had a higher level of relevance than satisfaction. Again, as discussed earlier, relevance for staff could mean something that

could immediately transferred and directly impact students. Social emotional support, while personally satisfying, does not directly impact students, thus it may not be viewed as relevant until a mind shift occurs, or it become a more accepted part of the school culture.

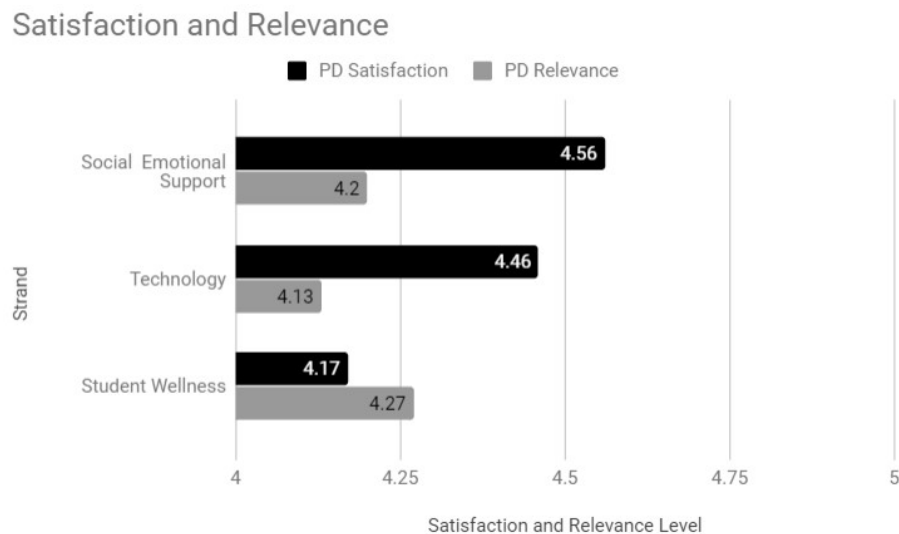


Figure 21. Content Satisfaction Level Compared to Relevance of Professional Development Strands in 2018-19 on a Five Point Likert Scale

Core Research Question #4 Findings- Do teachers find social-emotional support relevant to their practice?

- Teachers are interested in social-emotional support and they find the content satisfying, but they do not see it as relevant in the classroom as something directly related to students.
- For teachers to feel that social-emotional support is relevant, it must be specific and targeted.
- Teachers must continue to be educated on how positive impact social emotional support for them can impact the classroom.

- Just because teachers find social emotional support interesting and satisfying, it does not necessarily mean they will find it relevant.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

If social-emotional support for teachers is a priority, then school leaders must develop a specific plan to deliver social-emotional support. While it might be unrealistic to meet the needs of all through one particular method, several steps should be taken to make social emotional support for teachers more effective. Literature suggests effective social-emotional support for teachers can reduce stress and burnout, decrease absences and turnover, and ultimately empower teachers (Greenberg, Brown, Abenavoli, 2016, p. 5). The benefits of social-emotional support for teachers have the potential to benefit students indirectly as teachers as teachers become role models of balance for students. Additionally, creating positive teachers increases the positive climate in a school, thus both students and teachers benefit from structured social emotional support as evidenced by the result of this study.

One area that would improve social-emotional support for teachers is to increase choices among the social-emotional strand during professional development. Offering separate sessions on stress management and building relationships might decrease attendance at sessions because there are more options, but it would individualize the social-emotional support for the staff members. While all teachers would benefit from social emotional support, the type of social emotional support each staff member needs differs, thus more differentiation would be more beneficial.

In terms of interest level, the survey did not ask, nor did the data show, if staff were interested in multiple choices. The interest level could have been in one choice, and that would further validate the notion that teachers are interest in specific targeted topics and not just a specific strand. The survey does not conclude this as the question simply

asked about the overall interest level in the choices and not interest level in all three choices. Future research would be needed to clarify what teachers would choose if they had strong interest in multiple topics.

To more accurately measure feedback regarding professional development, and more specifically, social emotional support, data collection can be improved. One possible simple solution is to provide teachers with a few minutes at the conclusion of professional development to fill out a survey. Participation in the survey would likely drastically increase as it would also be used for attendance. Teachers proved to be very efficient in signing attendance sheets during professional development, so if an electronic survey is used to take attendance, more teachers are likely to fill out the survey. The survey should be short and targeted to provide the most accurate feedback regarding the professional development. Doing so would give administrators and professional development planners a more accurate representation of the feelings of the staff regarding specific offerings.

Along the same line as an increase in choice, structured social emotional support needs to be more specific and targeted. Data in this study indicate that teachers were looking for specific takeaways from professional development. They are looking for concepts and ideas that can be transferred right away. Teachers in this study indicated they wanted to be able to go to professional development, and then immediately apply what they have learned. This was evident as the February session that included both mindfulness as well as specific wellness strategies were considered the most relevant for the staff. Both of those sessions in that strand were targeted, teachers were given specific takeaways, thus it was viewed more relevant by the staff. That takeaway could be

something as simple as a breathing technique or the recipe for a healthy snack but giving participants a specific takeaway makes the professional development seem more worthwhile and relevant.

To truly see if the staff wants to participate in the “Learning Walk” model, it should be its own strand of professional development. As Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) discussed, “Every support activity is more likely to happen if time is provided during regular school hours or if teachers are paid for attendance,” (pg. 13). Teachers spend their plan periods making copies, grading papers, and returning phone calls. Other teachers might be preparing for coaching duties, and yet others might be taking care of their own social-emotional needs by reading quietly or exercising. If the learning walk proves to be successful as its own strand, and it becomes part of the building culture, it could be offered as a choice later. If teachers are truly interested in the “Learning Walk” model, time should be set aside for it to build momentum.

This study on social-emotional support uncovered that the staff was highly satisfied with the content of the professional development, but after the session, they did not find it as equally relevant. Setting aside a few minutes at the conclusion of each session for discussion and understanding could increase the feeling of relevance for participants. Social-emotional support for teachers is such a new concept that education on it could prove to be extremely important in its acceptance and feeling of relevance. In other words, taking the time to discuss why relationship building is important to a school could increase the feeling of relevance. It is quite possible that teachers do not see a connection to their classroom after doing a scavenger hunt with other staff members even though they might have had fun. Bringing closure by explaining how the social-

emotional support is relevant to the classroom might help increase the perception of relevance. If this higher perception of relevance spreads amongst the staff, increased attendance could happen because staff now understand how social-emotional support for teachers positively impacts the classroom.

To increase participation in social-emotional support, a small incentive could be offered to spark interest. The data from “Fun Friday” participation indicate that teachers are more likely to participate if there is an incentive. Using an analogy, a shopper at a grocery store may have no desire to buy and may not even like carrot cake, but when he or she is presented with a sample, the likelihood of trying and buying that carrot cake increases. Incentives could range from food, beverages, or even an opportunity to win a prize in a drawing. The incentive does not have to be of high value, rather the research from this dissertation in practice indicates a small token or treat is enough to motivate staff to step outside of their comfort zone.

A final recommendation would be to allot time for teachers to practice some of the social-emotional support strategies they learned in professional development. Following up on the professional learning decreases the feeling of randomness that an isolated professional development session has. When teachers learn a strategy with technology, they have the opportunity to use the skill taught, so there is built in follow up. If they learn a strategy for the classroom, utilizing it creates the necessary scaffold. To best maximize the impact of social-emotional support, especially in its infancy stages, time needs to be set aside for specific targeted activities to build on what was learned. Part of a professional athlete’s work day includes time to work out, and structuring time for teachers to participate in social-emotional support activities should be no different.

Being at one's peak mentally and physically is just as important for a teacher as it is for a baseball player that is about to step inside the batter's box. If reading a poem 30 minutes before game time helped our hometown team's clean-up hitter be more productive, as fans of that team, we would not care that the player was not taking additional batting practice. Educators need to have the same mindset, understanding, and flexibility when it comes to social-emotional support. These follow-up opportunities could prove to be crucial in making social-emotional support a part of the school culture.

Effectively implementing social-support for teachers requires a mind shift from administration and staff. This mind shift includes the belief that activities, learning, and development do not have to focus on students to positively impact students. If social-emotional support for students positively impacts student performance, then social-emotional support for teachers can impact teacher performance, and this ultimately impacts student performance. What teachers need to do for professional development and how they utilize plan time is different for each teacher. Shifting professional development from being organizationally driven to individually driven can help the mind shift regarding social-emotional support evolve and thus positively impact students sooner.

Moving Forward

Findings from this dissertation in practice were used to steer professional development for the 2019-20 academic year and will be used in future years. Some of the most notable changes for the 2019-20 based on data collected from this dissertation in practice are as follows:

- Provide staff with an overview of the professional development plan for the 2019-20 academic year at the beginning of the year meeting on August

6, 2019. This overview will include specific descriptions of the sessions including social emotional support for teachers. The overview will also explain the benefits of each session as well as its impact on the school culture.

- Allot 10 minutes at the conclusion of each session for the facilitator to bring closure to the session, explain relevance to practice, and remind staff of specific takeaways.
- Take session attendance electronically at the end of each session through the use of a short, targeted survey at the conclusion of each session before teachers are dismissed. This provides the most accurate attendance data, and it gives professional development planners more information to guide future professional development.
- Increased professional choice in 2019-20 as the Learning Walk strand was created. Time is provided during the week professional development is offered to participate in a Learning Walk instead of traditional professional development.
- Developed more incentives for “Fun Friday” activities. Incentives include things as simple as food or beverages, but other incentives include a drawing for a principal to teach a class, a premier parking spot, or other prizes from various school sponsors.
- Created opportunities for follow up with social emotional support. For example, staff members that participated in a relationship building activity have opportunity to order lunch from one of the school partners and eat

lunch with the staff members they met previously in the professional development.

- Finally, continued encouragement of staff to set aside time to address social-emotional needs.

When teachers have free time, they often try to figure out ways to help students. Educators are constantly putting “more items on their plate” to provide opportunity for students. When decisions are pondered in education, we often ask the question, “What is in the best interest of students?” While the focus should always be on students and their needs, taking the time to address teacher social-emotional needs could prove to be as instrumental in the success of students as any instructional strategy, technological shortcut or assessment tool learned in professional development. Social-emotional support for teachers through professional development and other choice opportunities is integral in providing students the most productive and conducive learning environment.

Appendices

Appendix A: List and Description of Fun Friday Activities

1. Energy bite and fresh fruit breakfast (Appreciation)- On the first Friday of the school year, healthy energy bites, fresh fruit, and coffee were available for staff in the teacher workroom. Food was purchased by Renaissance, an organization that recognizes students and staff.
2. Coffee Cart Delivery (Appreciation)- On the Friday after open house, a principal walked around the building with Vietnamese coffee for delivery and delivered to each classroom. The coffee was donated by a local restaurant and coffee shop about a mile from the school.
3. Walk a Mile with a Peer (Relationship Building) - Staff was encouraged to get a partner or two to walk four laps around the track during their plan period.
4. Staff Tailgate Before Football Game (Relationship Building)- Teachers were encouraged to sign up and bring a dish to share prior to the 7:00pm home football game. The tailgate was intended to give teachers a chance to talk and laugh together. In addition, families were invited to participate.
5. Healthy Veggie Snack with Greek Yogurt (Appreciation) – Vegetables and Greek Yogurt were available in the teacher workroom. The snacks were provided by the Culinary Arts class that used the opportunity to practice knife skills.
6. Color a Postcard and Send to an Alum Serving in the Military (Appreciation)- Staff members colored postcards for graduates currently serving in the military during their lunch. Pizza was provided for lunch from a local pizza restaurant.
7. Family Homecoming Carnival (Relationship Building)- During the Homecoming football game, bounce houses, rides, and games were provided during the football game for staff member children to play.
8. Trivia Friday Staff Edition (Relationship Building)- Teachers were encouraged to grab a partner and visit commons during lunch for trivia.
9. Hot Apple Cider Delivery (Appreciation)- A principal walked around the building with warm apple cider for the staff. Every classroom was visited between 8:30 and 10:00 am.
10. Positive Referral and Contact Parent (Appreciation)- Staff members were encouraged to write a positive referral for a student doing a random act of kindness. Teachers were then instructed to call home and share the good news with the parent.

11. Halloween Candy Swap (Relationship Building)- On November 2, two days after Halloween, staff members could bring in leftover Halloween candy and trade for their favorite. Candy that was left over was left in the teacher workroom.

12. Snow Day Pick ‘Em (Appreciation)- Staff picked a date on the calendar that they thought would be the 1st snow day of the year. The winner(s) received breakfast on an agreed upon date.

13. Donuts and Coffee with the Principal (Relationship Building)- Staff had a chance to get together as a group over donuts and coffee and discuss current issues with the administrative team

14. Thanksgiving Meals for Needy Families (Relationship Building)- Before school the Friday before Thanksgiving, staff put together Thanksgiving meals for needy families. Meals were delivered to the families by guidance counselors in the afternoon.

15. Nature Walk with Peer (Relationship Building) – Staff members were encouraged to walk with a peer around the perimeter of the campus while observing the Fall foliage.

16. Department Twitter Battle (Relationship Building)- Staff members were encouraged to get together as departments and “Tweet” out all the good things going on in classrooms that day.

17. Festive Sweater Day (Appreciation)- Staff wore ugly festive sweaters. At lunch, students voted on the winner, and the results were Tweeted to the community.

18. Off Campus Staff Breakfast (Relationship Building)- On the last day of the semester, staff members were invited to have breakfast off campus at a local restaurant. The restaurant graciously offered a discount for the staff.

19. Energy Bite, Fresh Fruit and Coffee (Appreciation)- On the first Friday of second semester, healthy energy bites, fresh fruit, and coffee were available for staff in the teacher workroom. Food was purchased by Renaissance, an organization that recognizes students and staff.

20. Hot Tea in the Staff Workroom (Appreciation)- A hot tea bar was set up in the teacher workroom that had a variety of teas and condiments.

21. Make a Meme (Appreciation)- Teachers had the opportunity to create a funny meme about something in their classroom, at school, or in the community. Memes were voted on, and the top meme received a prize.

22. 15 Minute Heart Health Walk with a Peer (Relationship Building)- On the district-wide heart health day, staff were encouraged to take a 15 minute walk with a peer during their plan time.

Appendix B: 2017-18 Professional Development Survey

2017-2018 Professional Development Survey

Please select an answer for each of the following questions.

* Required

1. 1. How many years have you been teaching? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 0-5
☐ 6-15
☐ 16-25
☐ 26+

2. 2. How would you describe your teaching career? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1st career
☐ 2nd career
☐ 3rd career

3. What is your gender? (Optional)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

4. Did you opt out of one hour of the required PD sessions by providing proof of attendance at a PD event? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

5. 5. How many hours of professional development have you CHOSEN to attend (ie. summer professional development, AP institutes, other opportunities) in the past 2 years? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 0-1 hours
☐ 2-6 hours
☐ 7-15 hours
☐ 16+ hours

6. 6. When you seek professional development outside of _____, what kind of professional development are you seeking? *

7. 7. Compared to when you began your teaching career, how would you rate your current level of enthusiasm for your profession? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ much more enthusiastic
- ☐ more enthusiastic
- ☐ about the same
- ☐ less enthusiastic
- ☐ burnt out

8. 8. Compared to when you began your teaching career how would you rate your openness to new ideas about instruction? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ pursuing transformational ideas
- ☐ actively seeking new ideas
- ☐ open to new ideas but not seeking them out
- ☐ somewhat open to new ideas
- ☐ content with current instructional methods

9. 10. What is your highest level of education attained? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Bachelors
- ☐ Bachelors +15
- ☐ Masters
- ☐ Masters +15
- ☐ Masters +30
- ☐ Doctorate

2017-2018 Professional Development Survey

10. 12. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements regarding our professional learning opportunities this past year. *
- Mark only one oval per row.

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
The content was relevant and helpful to my role in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content helped me do my job more effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content helped me increase student achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The choices offered were differentiated to meet the needs of all teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content improved my knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content was worth my time to attend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content has had a positive and lasting impact on my role in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Row 8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PD this year was divided into three separate strands: communication wellness; student wellness; and teacher wellness.

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

PD Strands 2017-18

Date	9/18	10/16	11/13	2/12
Strand				
Teacher Wellness	Managing Workload	Connecting with Staff	Mindfulness	Healthy Living
Communication Wellness	Student to Student	Staff to Parents	Staff to Student	Staff to Staff
Student Wellness	Resiliency	Student Social Media	Diversity (LGBTQA+)	Addiction

	I disagree completely	I somewhat disagree	I am neutral	I somewhat agree	I agree completely
I attended more than one strand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There was continuity between the sessions in a strand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The three strands were helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There was enough options to meet my needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This model should be used again in 2018-2019	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. **14. Are you interested in being a PD presenter? If so, include your name and what topic area you are interested in presenting.**

13. **15. We are in the process of developing the schedule for next year. Please list three professional development topics of interest to you. ***

14. **16. Is there a session from this year that you would like to see repeated next year?**

15. **17. Is there a session from this year that we should avoid repeating this year? Please explain.**

2017-2018 Professional Development Survey

16. 18. In order to help us plan for next year's professional development sessions, please indicate your interest in the following topics. *

Mark only one oval per row.

	No interest	little interest	moderate interest	strong interest
Best Teaching Practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing Student Engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Co-Teaching (SSD and MHS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restorative Justice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiated Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategies for Working with Diverse Learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High Quality Assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategies for Early Career Educators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Literacy Strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategies for Gifted Learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategies for At-Risk Learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Subject Area/ Content Area determined by department or PLC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Google Classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tech Tools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Best Grading Practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Action Research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Book Study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategies for Supporting Social and Emotional Needs of Learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication Strategies (Twitter, Remind etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing Scoring Guides	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Utilizing Data to Inform Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IMP -Inquiry into my Practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher Wellness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. 19. Is there anything else that you would like to share with the committee regarding building facilitated professional development?

18. In terms of social and emotional support for teachers, what topics would you find most useful and relevant? (Examples: relationship building, coping with stress, time management, conflict management, mindfulness)

Appendix C: Sample Climate Survey Data

DataWise > Climate/Character/SEL > Teacher

Actions | | | 1 of 1 | Find Next |

Autonomy Domain (click here for additional data by question)
 Blue-Above District Average Red-Below District Average Grey-Same as District Average

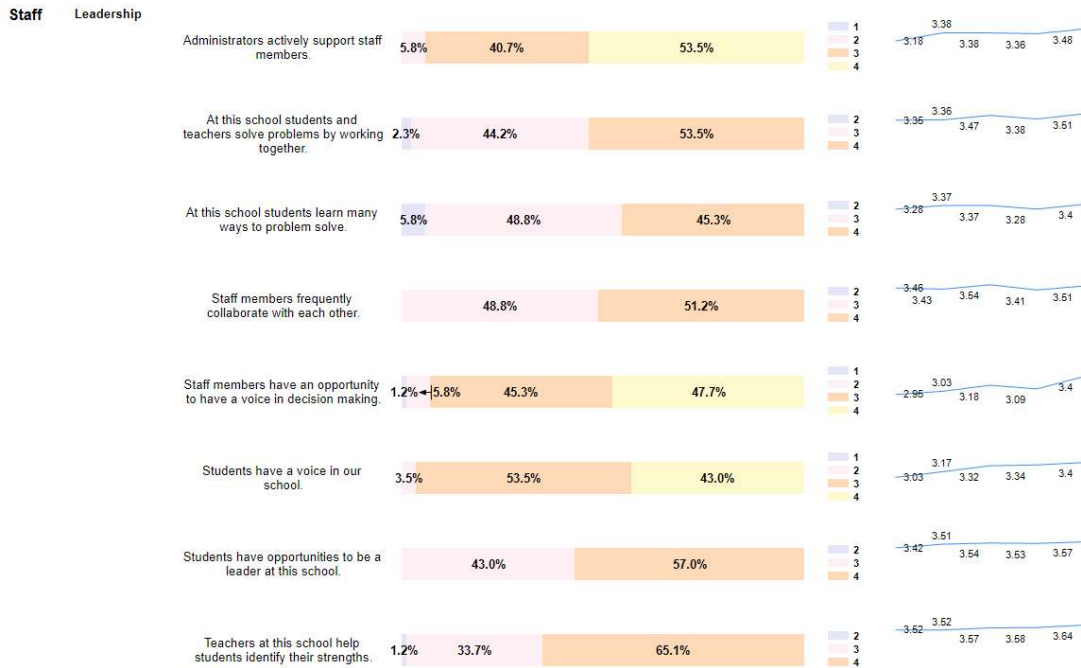
Autonomy Score by Year-All Surveys			Autonomy Score by Sub-Domain-All Surveys				
End Year			End Year	Leadership	Service	Voice	
2014	3.23	3.37	2014	3.19	3.35	3.42	3.46
2015	▲ 3.28	3.36	2015	▲ 3.25	3.33	▲ 3.43	3.47
2016	▲ 3.31	3.40	2016	▲ 3.28	3.38	■ 3.43	3.49
2017	▼ 3.30	3.43	2017	■ 3.28	3.41	▼ 3.41	3.52
2018	▲ 3.38	3.41	2018	▲ 3.34	3.38	▲ 3.50	3.51

*K-2 Data is not calculated in these averages because it is on a 3 pt scale.

Autonomy Score by Year and Survey

End Year	Parent	Staff
2014	3.18	3.29
2015	▲ 3.24	3.30
2016	▼ 3.16	3.32
2017	▲ 3.24	3.45
2018	▲ 3.32	3.37

*K-2 Data is on a 3 pt scale.



Belonging Domain [\(click here for additional data by question\)](#)

Blue: Above District Average Red: Below District Average Grey: Same as District Average

Belonging Score by Year-All Surveys

End Year	Score	Target
2014	3.31	3.43
2015	▲ 3.34	3.40
2016	▲ 3.35	3.44
2017	▲ 3.36	3.49
2018	▲ 3.40	3.43

*K-2 Data is not calculated in these averages because it is on a 3 pt scale.

Belonging Score by Sub-Domain-All Surveys

End Year	Engagement	Relationships	Safety
2014	3.27	3.41	3.38
2015	▲ 3.29	3.38	▲ 3.48
2016	▲ 3.34	3.43	▼ 3.42
2017	▲ 3.34	3.46	▲ 3.49
2018	▲ 3.36	3.42	▲ 3.49

*K-2 Data is not calculated in these averages because it is on a 3 pt scale.

Belonging Score by Year and Survey

End Year	Parent	Staff
2014	3.25	3.48
2015	▲ 3.29	▲ 3.50
2016	▼ 3.21	▲ 3.55
2017	▲ 3.30	▼ 3.46
2018	▲ 3.36	▲ 3.54

*K-2 Data is on a 3 pt scale.

Relationships



Competence Domain [\(click here for additional data by question\)](#)

Blue-Above District Average Red-Below District Average Grey-Same as District Average

Competence Score by Year-All Surveys

End Year		
2014	3.24	3.39
2015	▲ 3.32	3.40
2016	▼ 3.29	3.40
2017	▼ 3.28	3.44
2018	▲ 3.38	3.40

*K-2 Data is not calculated in these averages because it is on a 3 pt scale.

Competence Score by Sub-Domain-All Surveys

End Year	Hope		Motivation	
2014	3.20	3.36	3.22	3.40
2015	▲ 3.30	3.38	▲ 3.30	3.40
2016	▼ 3.23	3.36	■ 3.30	3.41
2017	▲ 3.24	3.44	▼ 3.26	3.42
2018	▲ 3.36	3.38	▲ 3.37	3.40

*K-2 Data is not calculated in these averages because it is on a 3 pt scale.

Competence Score by Year and Survey

End Year	Parent		Staff	
2014	3.26	3.37	3.22	3.42
2015	▲ 3.34	3.38	▲ 3.30	3.42
2016	▼ 3.22	3.36	▲ 3.33	3.42
2017	▲ 3.29	3.49	▼ 3.27	3.38
2018	▲ 3.37	3.39	▲ 3.40	3.41

*K-2 Data is on a 3 pt scale.

Staff Hope

"We smile, laugh and have fun at this school."



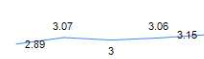
1
2
3
4



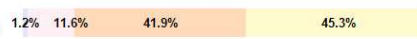
My students set learning goals based on how they are doing in school.



1
2
3
4



Staff members are celebrated for doing the right thing at this school.



1
2
3
4



Appendix D: 2018-19 Professional Development Choice Strands

Date	Sept 17	Oct 15	Nov 12	Feb 4
Strand				
Teacher Wellness <i>Researcher</i>	Building Relationships Teacher D/ Researcher	Teacher Care Package Teacher F/Teacher G	Peer Support Teacher G/ Researcher	Mindfulness Teacher F/ Teacher I
Technology <i>Teacher A</i>	Classroom Managementt with Chromebooks Teacher E	Google Certification Teacher A	Chrome Extensions Teacher C	AR/VR Teacher E
Student Wellness <i>Teacher B</i>	Impact of Trauma on Student Learning Teacher F	Recognizing Drug Use in the classroom Teacher H	Student Panel on Cultural Norms Teacher B	Bullying/Safe Connections Teacher J
Technology Fridays <i>Teacher C</i>	Lunch and Learn			

Responsibilities of Point Person:

1. Communicate and arrange presenter (s)
2. Coordinate date and time with presenter
3. Give Course description and explain what presenter should be addressing
4. Share number of attendees with presenter one week in advance of presentation
5. Confirm attendance with the presenter one week in advance of presentation

Responsibilities of steering committee:

1. Handle the evaluations
2. Sign ups for the sessions - need to be done two weeks prior to session
3. Subs for all presenters
4. Present to staff PD plan for next year (optional PD content session for the summer)
5. Encourage people to sign up in advance
6. Last minute check in with presenters and point person for each session

Appendix E : Professional Development Feedback Survey

Professional Development Feedback (Sample)

Thank you for participating in professional development. We hope you had as much satisfaction attending as we did organizing it.

We want to hear your feedback so we can keep improving our logistics and content. Please fill this quick survey and let us know your thoughts.

Your email address _____ will be recorded when you submit this form. Not

[Sign out](#)

- Required

1. What year are you serving in education (combined in and out of Rockwood)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-11 years
- ☐ 12-20 years
- ☐ 21 or more years

2. What position best describes your primary responsibilities?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Core Subject Teacher (LA, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Languages)
- ☐ Elective Teacher (PE, FACS, Business)
- ☐ Student Support (Librarian, Counselor)
- ☐ Special School District Teacher
- ☐ Other

3. Which strand of professional development did you attend?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Student Wellness
- ☐ Communication Wellness
- ☐ Teacher Wellness

4. There were choices offered in professional development that interested me.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

5. How relevant and helpful do you think it will be for your job? **Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not very	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much

6. Based on the purpose of the PD, did it meet the objectives?*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Satisfied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Satisfied

7. How satisfied were you with the session content?*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Poor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Excellent

8. What do you plan on implementing?

9. For future planning, which component of social-emotional support for teachers are you most interested?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Stress Management
- ☐ Self-Care
- ☐ Relationship Building

10. What choice opportunities have you participated in over the last month? (check all that apply)*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Bowling on the first teacher work day
- ☐ Write a thank you note to someone that has made an impact on you.
- ☐ Energy Bite and fresh fruit breakfast on August 17
- ☐ Coffee Cart Sponsored by on August 24
- ☐ Walk a mile with another teacher on August 31
- ☐ Staff Tailgate on September 7

Appendix F: Exit Emotional Support Survey, 25 February 2019)

1. Why did you choose social-emotional support for teachers?

2. What value in meeting others did you derive from the professional development or the other choice opportunities?

3. How important is choice to you in professional development

Appendix G: Building Scavenger Hunt

Building Scavenger Hunt

1. Take a picture with a principal.
2. Take a picture with someone that has been teaching for 20+ years.
3. Take a picture of yourself in a mirror in the weight room or fitness room.
4. Take a picture with someone that has been teaching for 1-3 years.
5. Take a picture with the Language Arts or Social Studies department chair.
6. Take a selfie with the registrar.
7. Take a selfie with the nurses.
8. Take a picture with the FACS, PE, or Business department chair.
9. Find the teacher in the ROTC room.(excluding hours 4 and 7.)
10. Take a picture of yourself in front of the choir room door.
11. Take a picture of a bird in the only outdoor cut-thru on campus. (hint- it is in the back of the building on the second floor).
12. Take a picture of a live animal in the building.
13. Take a picture with the mascot statue. (hint-it is outside).
14. Grab a special snack in line 5 of the cafeteria. (This must be your last stop)

Appendix H: IRB Approval

**Office of Research Administration**

One University Boulevard
 St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4480
 Telephone: 314-518-5889
 Fax: 314-518-5798
 E-mail: ora@umsl.edu

DATE: September 4, 2018

TO: Richard Ragins
FROM: University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1183833-1] Impact of Implementing Social Emotional Support for Teachers
REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: September 4, 2018
EXPIRATION DATE: September 4, 2023
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

The chairperson of the University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB has reviewed the above mentioned protocol for research involving human subjects and determined that the project qualifies for expedited review under Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46.110b. The time period for this approval expires one year from the date listed below. You must notify the University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB in advance of any proposed major changes in your approved protocol, e.g., addition of research sites or research instruments.

You must file an annual report with the committee. This report must indicate the starting date of the project and the number of subjects to date from start of project, or since last annual report, whichever is more recent.

Any consent or assent forms must be signed in duplicate and a copy provided to the subject. The principal investigator must retain the other copy of the signed consent form for at least three years following the completion of the research activity and they must be available for inspection if there is an official review of the UM-St. Louis human subjects research proceedings by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Protection from Research Risks.

This action is officially recorded in the minutes of the committee.

If you have any questions, please contact Carl Basel at 314-518-8028 or basel@umsl.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Collective Impact

Educators strive to create a growth mindset with their students. They want students to be lifelong learners, engaged in the process, and happy to be at school. Unfortunately, often what educators want for their students is not what they get for themselves. While learning should never end, outdated and reactionary professional development force teachers to “fend for themselves” when trying to evolve. This research concluded that the expectations for teaching and learning should be the same for both teachers and students.

In so many other professions, the desire to stay current and relevant is part of the culture. While hugely successful in the 1950’s, no professional football team operates the same offense that Head Coach Vince Lombardi orchestrated that resulted multiple championships. News agencies, both televised and print, no longer count on yesterday’s news for future subscribers. On a similar note, consumers look for the most current practices in their search for goods and services. Patients do not look for heart doctors that are using the exact same procedures they learned in medical school in the 1960’s. If other professions are expected to evolve and develop, education should be no different.

By researching systemic ways to develop, and apply, high impact professional development practices for both pedagogical improvement and emotional well-being of educators to better serve students, we found the answer lies not in a single system. In fact, we discovered the exact opposite. Rather than delivering “professional development in a box,” our research highlights the importance of choice, specialization, and individualization with professional development. Collectively, our research follows a common theme: differentiation. Not everyone needs the same support, thus

differentiation can prove to be both a tremendous motivator and beneficial to staff and students and our research demonstrates how empowering something as simple as choice can mine the rare gem of impact on practice.

Additionally, the research uncovered a few key components of differentiation regarding professional development for teachers; specifically, content needs to be specific and targeted to individual needs. While professional development is intended to have long term positive impact on teaching and learning, classroom teachers are looking for a takeaway. In other words, teachers are looking for something they can immediately transfer to the classroom. Findings in this research point out that teachers are also looking for guidance in this transfer. That guidance can be a simple explanation of why the professional development is relevant, or it can be something a bit more complex such as a structured plan for the transfer of professional development.

Rethinking and redesigning the content and delivery of professional development could prove to be a game changer in the teaching profession. By personalizing professional development and meeting all teacher needs, both professionally and personally, teachers will have the opportunity to participate in professional development they feel good about. These positive feelings can lead to a change in practice, the implementation of new practices, and more positive climate and culture in the building. Management Guru Peter Drucker is often credited with the phrase, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast,” (Cave, 2017, p. 1) and the researcher' absolutely applies to professional development in schools.

Implementing quality professional development that focuses on individual needs can create the outcome that all educators want from professional development, an engaged school community with the capacity and desire for continued growth.

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